

## **Is the Lasallian University an Oxymoron?**

Luke Salm, FSC, S.T.D., *Manhattan College, New York, USA*

*(An address delivered by Brother Luke on March 17, 1998,  
at Christian Brothers University, Memphis, TN, USA)*

It is indeed a pleasure for me to come once again to Memphis and to share once again (this is the third time) some thoughts on what it means to be a Lasallian university. Some of you may have been lured here under false pretenses because the advertised topic – the mission of the university – is not exactly the one I agreed to prepare. But never fear, the mission of the university is very much tied to the question I intend to address: Is the Lasallian university an oxymoron? For those of you whose Greek is rusty, an oxymoron is a contradiction in terms, like bitter-sweet or tough love. Is the Lasallian university a similar concept? That is how I plan to address the question of the university's mission.

But first a few words about the meaning of Lasallian. We toss that word around a lot these days, but sometimes I think we forget that the adjective derives from a noun, the name of the person known as John Baptist de la Salle. Nothing can be legitimately called Lasallian unless it relates in some evident way to the person, the vision and the achievement of the man that the Catholic Church calls a saint and the patron of teachers. At the risk of going over ground already familiar to most of you, it might be well to recall just who that man was and what he accomplished.

De La Salle lived his whole life within the confines of the France of the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, his dates closely coincident with the storied reign of the "Sun King," Louis XIV, ruling absolutely by divine right over a stratified and religiously homogeneous society. John Baptist was born in 1651 into a comfortable family of the well-to-do upper bourgeoisie. Early on he showed signs of a priestly vocation that he pursued despite the death of his parents and family obligations that ensued therefrom. Provided with a thorough classical and theological education, as well as a lucrative benefice as canon of the Reims cathedral, he was ordained in 1678 and might well have adjusted to the mores and culture of his social and clerical class, lived up to the expectations of family and friends in an upwardly mobile ecclesiastical career, perhaps as a bishop or even a cardinal. And so he might have lived and died and then been completely forgotten.

But something happened to change that scenario. The young Father De La Salle suddenly found himself involved with a small group of barely literate young men trying to teach poor boys in the rundown charity schools in the parishes of the city. For these men, it was a living of sorts, at least until something better might come along. In those days, schoolteachers had no social or professional status, no standards to meet, and little motivation to stay with the job any longer than necessary. The leader of that little group in Reims was an older layman, Adrien Nyel by name. He was a good man, enthusiastic and idealistic, but with little sense of how to run an organization, or how to keep a good thing going once he got it started.

And so it happened, almost by accident, that Father De La Salle gradually assumed the leadership of that nondescript band of lay teachers. At first he helped pay their rent. Then he

moved them into a house near his own. When he saw close at hand how uncultured and uneducated they were, he invited them to his home for meals to try to improve their knowledge, their religious practice, and their table manners. Then, much to the shock and chagrin of the family, he decided to bring them into his home to live. Finally, in 1682, he moved with them to a rented house in a poor neighborhood. From that center, this first community of teachers staffed three parish schools. It was the beginning of what today is the worldwide Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

Through all of this, De La Salle himself did not fully realize what was happening. It was only years later, as he himself tells us, that he realized that God was leading him, one step at a time, to commit himself entirely to the development of the schools. To appreciate the significance of what this reluctant newcomer on the educational scene was able eventually to achieve, we have to remind ourselves of the school situation in the France of 1680. The university system, which provided a classical education from grade school through to the doctorate, was in place and had been centuries. But that was accessible, as it had been to De La Salle, only to those who were socially and financially in a position to afford it. Apart from the university schools, the only elementary education available, and that also at a price, was from teachers in what were called the “little schools” who made a living running a school by themselves, usually in their own homes.

As for the poor, nobody much cared. Although pastors were supposed to provide charity schools for their parishes, most of these schools were poorly run, there was little discipline, attendance was not enforced, the students were unkempt and prone both to lice and vice, the teachers were incompetent and poorly paid, and the school itself might be closed down for long periods at the slightest excuse. True, there were some attempts in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to reform the parish charity schools, but these initiatives were widely scattered and had little permanent impact on the distressing educational scene. De La Salle realized that the unskilled workers and the poor, being usually little educated, and occupied all day in gaining a livelihood for themselves and their families, could not give their children the instruction they needed, much less a suitable Christian education. It was to meet the needs of the children of the workers and the poor, that he established what he called the gratuitous and Christian Schools.

To achieve all of this, to enter into the world of the poor with creativity and authenticity, Father De La Salle had to sacrifice all of his personal ambition, his family fortune, his ecclesiastical honors, his comfortable lifestyle, and even his personal reputation. People thought he was crazy. His own family disowned him. The educational authorities of the time had him haled into court, condemned, and fined because the educational policies he introduced threatened to break down the established social barriers. In his determination to give rich and poor the same education in the same classroom, and all for free, he had to act against the law.

Then there were the Church authorities. Pastors, bishops, and even the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, hounded De La Salle relentlessly. They could neither understand nor control this persistent innovator who didn't want his Brothers to be priests, who had his own ideas about how to run a school, and how to make the Christian message appealing to those who rarely heard good news of any kind.

De La Salle did not limit his educational vision to gratuitous elementary schools for the poor. He realized that there were other needs. Well trained teachers were high on his list of priorities. On three distinct occasions he was able to establish experimental training schools for lay teachers. Aware that there was no provision at the time for working teenagers to continue their education, De La Salle founded a Sunday program of advanced courses in practical subjects just for them. He opened a boarding school with offerings in advanced technical or pre-professional courses, unavailable, unheard of, and unthinkable in the colleges and universities. He pioneered in what we now call programs in special education for backward students. He opened one of the first institutions in France to specialize in the care and education of young delinquents.

When De La Salle died in 1719 he left behind an Institute composed of about 100 Brothers conducting a network of elementary parish schools all over France from the English Channel to the Mediterranean Sea. He left as his legacy a new type of school system for the elementary education of the poor, a new set of standards that would transform teaching school into a profession and a vocation, a new community of consecrated lay teachers as a new form of religious life in the Church. Eventually, and especially after the French Revolution, the work would spread all over the world so that now there are Lasallian institutions adapting at every level to new needs and new cultural situations on every continent and in over 80 countries.

Measured against the original pioneering but culturally limited circumstances in the lifetime of De La Salle, it may be questioned whether any of the institutions that today call themselves Lasallian are truly such, certainly not in the literal sense. As we look at the wide gap that separates the Lasallian institutions of the Founder's day from those of our own, we realize that institutions, like persons, can experience change and growth in the face of new challenges and opportunities. The question is not one of literal duplication as over against change and development, but rather one of identity. If the Lasallian university of today is not the Lasallian parish school of seventeenth century France, the question is whether the Lasallian identity has been preserved, whether the Lasallian vision and spirit are sufficiently evident in the university to identify it as Lasallian. An even more fundamental question is whether there is something in the nature of a university that almost inevitably forces a choice between being Lasallian or being a university.

To answer that question, I think we have to be clear about what we mean in this discussion by a university. The term doesn't mean the same thing in every academic context. In recent years, many of our Lasallian four-year-colleges, including this one, have been legally entitled to call themselves universities. Although I understand the practical reasons for this in terms of public image and qualifying for financial support, I don't think it accords with reality to put any Lasallian institution in the same category as the Ivy League universities, the major state universities, the better Jesuit universities, or even Notre Dame and Catholic University. I would go so far as to say that a Lasallian university in that sense would indeed be an oxymoron; it would be the equivalent of establishing in the name of De La Salle the kind of university to which De La Salle spent his whole life in establishing an alternative. To my mind, we may as well leave such universities to the Jesuits, who long ago incorporated the education of the elite into their charism, their ministry, and their tradition. They are better at it than we are.

For purposes of our discussion, then, we may as well use the terms university and college as interchangeable in the Lasallian context; we are talking about the seven American Lasallian colleges in general and this one in particular. I do not see any of our Lasallian institutions of higher learning moving very far from their original foundation as four-year colleges. Most of them are struggling for survival in an increasingly complex and competitive educational environment. They are struggling, too, with identity problems in terms of their relationship to the Roman Catholic Church as well as to the Lasallian tradition. So whether we call it a college or university, the concrete question we have to ask is this: Is it an oxymoron for an institution of higher learning such as CBU to call itself Lasallian?

One approach is to try to find in the tradition inherited from De La Salle certain qualities that enhance rather than conflict with the total university experience. If they are present, the Lasallian university is not an oxymoron. To the extent they are not present, the claim to be a Lasallian university is indeed a contradiction in terms. The name John Baptist de La Salle gave to the Institute he founded was and remains the Brothers of the Christian Schools. In this country it is often shortened to Christian Brothers. So we have two terms to help us focus the discussion, the Christian Brothers and the Christian Schools. We could phrase the question this way: What are the Christian Brothers and the Christian Schools doing in a modern American university like this?

Let us begin with the Christian Brothers. After all, that is what your university calls itself. It seems to me that there are two elements here that could not only characterize a university as Lasallian but also enhance its effectiveness as a university. When the Christian Brothers founded their first colleges in this country they brought to higher education two very important elements in their tradition: first of all brotherhood, in association for an educational mission and, secondly, commitment to teaching as a vocation.

The first thing to say about the Christian Brothers is that they are and always have been Brothers, that is, members of a religious but exclusively lay educational community associated in brotherhood. In the long run, what made the schools of De La Salle succeed in transforming elementary education in Catholic France was the community of schoolteachers, who very early on assumed an identity as Brothers. Their aim was to become a fraternal community associated to do educational work together. They realized that to be effective, teaching had to be a corporate and communal exercise. While that almost goes without saying today, it was a major breakthrough on the part of De La Salle to abandon the model of an isolated schoolteacher trying to manage a parish school. Association in the teaching enterprise was such an essential element in the Lasallian school that De La Salle would never assign less than two Brothers to a school. Still today, association to do an educational work is one of the vows that the Brothers take. One of the values the Brothers brought to the colleges they founded in this country was this strong sense of community and brotherhood in the enterprise of higher education.

Brotherhood in association has two dimensions that we now realize are transferable to persons who are not Brothers, and transferable as well to the university context. Association in brotherhood implies that teachers and administrators, as well as teachers and teachers, are relating to one another in an educational community; brotherhood also implies something about the relation of teachers to students. Brotherhood expresses a relationship on a horizontal level, as

distinct from the vertical relationship we have with persons we call father or mother. And we do not forget that brotherhood implies sisterhood. Brother and sister are the words the New Testament uses to express the relationships among all the members of the Christian community. In the contemporary world, brotherhood and sisterhood more and more express the longing for community and solidarity: among peoples and nations worldwide, or among persons united in a common cause, or within closely knit interpersonal communities. The Christian Brothers have no monopoly on brotherhood; they are now in a better position than ever to share their long tradition of brotherhood, to help maintain the community dimension of the educational enterprise at any level.

The fact that the Brothers are not called Fathers, that they share with their colleagues living in the secular world a common teaching vocation and lay status in the Church, can add a distinctive tone to the Lasallian university. The clerical element is lacking, although the dignity of the priesthood, and the dignity of biological fatherhood for that matter, are deeply respected. Teachers with experience elsewhere in Catholic universities will tell you that the atmosphere in a Lasallian institution is different. There is less pomposity and posturing, better relations between administration and faculty, more involvement in the concerns and the lifestyle of the students. Relationships in a Lasallian school tend to be more informal, more open, and more direct.

In speaking to the Brothers of his time, De La Salle used the image of the older brother to describe the relationship between the Lasallian educator and the students. There is a bonding between an older and a younger sibling that provides a special opportunity to teach and to learn that is not present in a youngster's relationship to father, or mother, or uncle, or aunt. This theme was developed in landmark Declaration on the Brother in the Modern World from the Brothers' General Chapter of 1967. The text reads:

De La Salle conceived of education in terms of a fraternal relationship between the teacher and the student. The teacher is totally immersed in the life of the students, sharing their interests, their worries, their hopes. The teacher is not so much a schoolmaster instilling a set of teachings as a kind of older brother who helps them to be aware of what the Spirit is speaking within themselves, what their own abilities are, and little by little how they may discover their true place in the world.

Being brother, and a brother or sister associated in an educational community, is then a Lasallian characteristic that can permeate and distinguish the faculty and staff of any Lasallian institution of higher learning.

Another aspect that the Brothers brought to their colleges was their commitment to teaching as a vocation. The Brothers were founded to be first and foremost teachers, nothing less, nothing more, and nothing else, unless it be to support in some way those who do teach. John Baptist de La Salle would never have gotten involved in education at all if he had not encountered that first group of benighted school teachers. One of the major achievements of De La Salle was to transform the despised occupation of teaching school into a vocation and a ministry. He recognized from the very start that if the teachers were to be effective in the classroom they would have to see themselves and their teaching rather differently. He began by raising the level of their own education and developing in them, mostly through exchanges among themselves, a

sense of professional competence and confidence. Little by little, as an organized curriculum and an administrative model for conducting the schools were developed, the teachers could begin to take pride in being teachers.

But De La Salle had more than competent and effective teaching in mind. For him, teaching was more than a job, more even than a profession, but a vocation in the theological sense, a call from God to be a teacher. We can imagine De La Salle saying in effect to his teachers, then and today, “You may think you became a teacher because you applied for a job, or were attracted to the work, or liked to deal with students, or thought you were qualified. But the reality is that God chose you, of all people, and is calling you to do God’s work.” De La Salle’s expectation was that the teachers would represent God’s love to the students, not only that they would be role models themselves, but that the students would learn from the teacher’s example and love for them what it means to encounter the living Christ.

In the three centuries that separate us from De La Salle, the Brothers have never lost the centrality of teaching in their vocation and their tradition. In all the schools at every level, including the university, the insistence on good teaching from committed teachers has been recognized as characteristic of the Lasallian school. The teaching in Lasallian schools for many years now has been carried out largely by men and women who are not Brothers. But just as with brotherhood, the hope is that the commitment to teaching as a vocation will not only be shared but be strong enough and obvious, especially in the university context, to characterize an institution as Lasallian.

The second title that we have to examine is the Christian schools. For De La Salle, this term had two meanings. First of all, it distinguished his schools from the poorly-run charity schools of the day as something new, created to meet a specific need, the plight of the children of the artisans and the poor. Secondly, the Christian Schools integrated religious education with human education in what today we would call secular subjects. To what extent are these two characteristics relevant to the university today?

One criterion to determine whether a university is Lasallian is to what extent it meets a need. That was at the heart of De La Salle’s vision and achievement. He realized that the artisans and the poor of his day needed the quality schooling that they could not afford and no one would or could supply. In the same way, a different need, but a not very different clientele, led the Brothers in the last century in this country to become involved in higher education. The need they saw and met successfully was to provide entrée to the professions for the sons of immigrants at low cost and in an academic context that would bolster rather than threaten their ancestral faith. The Catholic Church in America needed the Brothers’ college also, not only to absorb the overflow or the rejects from the more elitist Jesuit institutions, but also to help educate a native American diocesan clergy in a situation where young men inclined to the priesthood would not be co-opted into the Jesuit novitiate. Historically then, in terms of meeting a need, the American Lasallian university in its origins was no oxymoron, but very much in line with the vision and initiative of John Baptist de La Salle.

Unlike the seventeenth century France or nineteenth century America, Lasallian institutions today no longer have the field to themselves. The educational needs at every level, even for

religiously oriented education, are being met by others that have in some cases become our direct competitors. The clientele we serve, the manner in which we operate, the standardized requirements we are forced to meet, make it increasingly difficult to differentiate our colleges and universities from what we call our benchmark institutions, which are usually identified on the basis of size, curriculum, admission standards, and reputation and almost never on their Lasallian character. If the university today wants to think of itself as Lasallian in this sense, it would have to be clear that it serves a genuine need, that it provides a kind of university education not available elsewhere, that its Lasallian character has helped it to create a niche for itself in a highly competitive climate.

The Christian Schools of De La Salle in his day did more than fill a vacuum, meeting the need for quality schools for the poor where there were none. He called his schools Christian Schools to affirm their Christian character, to supply badly needed religious instruction, to contribute to the salvation in this world, as well as in the next, of those whom he described of far from salvation. When De La Salle speaks of the teacher in a Christian school as engaged in a ministry and mission, he means more than the teaching of religion. He wanted the schools to be penetrated with a religious spirit all day long. Important as the formal religious instruction is, De La Salle knew that it is not the only way, or even the best way, for an educator to bring an experience of God's love to the students. He never separated the teaching of religion and teaching the other school subjects. He was not interested in isolated catechetical centers or Sunday Schools for religious instruction. He realized that the school provides a unique opportunity to integrate religion and life, to develop in unison the full human and spiritual potential of the young people in the school that is the center of their life experience.

One of the needs that the Lasallian university can supply in today's culture is the opportunity to pursue higher education in a religiously sensitive environment. This demands in the first place solid academic courses in religious studies and a vibrant and widely supported campus ministry program. Yet the Lasallian tradition would not limit the religious element to the religion department or to campus ministry, indispensable though they be if the institution is to be Lasallian. For many young people today the university is their last chance formally to address the major questions concerning the meaning of their existence, to recognize the seeds of destruction in society and in themselves, to become aware of the major inequities in social and political life, to anticipate the futility of a life centered on pleasure, wealth, and power. To lead students to address these concerns in the light of the Christian mission of a Lasallian university is the responsibility of the entire educational community. This certainly does not mean proselytizing, or even airing one's personal religious convictions. Some public prayer and ritual may be appropriate in a university setting, but such activity is secondary to the formal process of education. Values are most appropriately examined in the classroom setting in a wide range of academic disciplines. Today's theology recognizes that all genuinely human values have their origin in God and are therefore in some sense religious; that value-centered education, however imparted and by whomever, is therefore a mission and a ministry.

There is a paragraph in the already cited Declaration of the Brothers' 1967 General Chapter that could be paraphrased in this way:

Teachers exercise a religious mission whenever they truly educate. They exercise a mission when they awaken in students a serious attitude toward life, lead them to experience the autonomy of

personal thought, help them overcome their personal prejudices and peer pressure, teach them how to listen and to try to understand, to be open to others, to trust and to love (41, 2).

When that happens in the university, it is not a contradiction to call it Lasallian.

So much for the tradition and the theory. Now we have to look at the reality, ask honestly to what extent these elements drawn from the Lasallian tradition and language are perceived, are operative, or are threatened in a university such as this.

Brotherhood in association and teaching as a vocational priority are, then, two elements implicit in the term Christian Brothers that determine what it might mean to call a university Lasallian, to say nothing of calling it a Christian Brothers university. Is that title in fact an oxymoron when we look at the reality? The university is presently faced with a declining number of Christian Brothers to penetrate the institution with the Lasallian vision. The international Institute of the Brothers is presently hopeful that the concept of a Lasallian mission shared between Brothers and lay partners will assure the continuation of all that is best in what De La Salle envisioned. It has yet to be shown, however, that as the number of Brothers declines and they eventually disappear altogether, as the memory of what the Brothers meant to an institution fades into history, that the Lasallian vision will survive.

In the present situation, while there are still limited numbers of Brothers in evidence, it is not altogether clear that brotherhood in association and the commitment to teaching are the values to which the Brothers give witness. Administration seems to be more and more the preferred niche for the Brothers who remain active. The rationale is that the administrator is in a better position to maintain the Lasallian tradition. But is that necessarily the case? First of all, there is a hint of paternalism in that approach, the antithesis of what it means to be brothers. Apart from that, in today's world of higher education, the administrator, especially the top administrator, has to be more of a CEO than anything that could be termed brother. That can be at odds with the very idea of brotherhood and association. I'm on dangerous ground here, I know, and I think in this institution you are luckier than most in having someone at the top who manages to juggle the two roles of administration and brotherhood rather well. We are not talking about personalities here, but rather about what elements in the university structure make it difficult to maintain the Lasallian characteristic of brotherhood in association for an educational enterprise.

Apart from the presence or absence of the Brothers, we must also face the fact that in today's world it becomes increasingly difficult to think of the university as a community, at least in the intentional and interpersonal meaning of the term. As the university structure becomes more and more complex and compartmentalized, it becomes difficult for persons to know one another, much less relate in any personal and meaningful way. To the extent that the university becomes depersonalized, and brotherhood in community yields to bureaucratic rivalries, to that extent it can hardly be called Lasallian.

There are problems, too, with the Brothers' commitment to teaching as a vocation. I have become increasingly concerned, since there are fewer and fewer of us, that the Brothers themselves seem to have joined the flight from the classroom. This is, perhaps, less a problem in the university than at the secondary level, where after a few years, classroom teaching becomes a physical and psychological burden without stimulation or rewards. Even so, if the traditional



commitment of the Brothers to the teaching vocation is to continue to influence the university, it is time to raise some questions about the number of Brothers assigned to administrative positions. It may be nice to have an office, a secretary, and a budget. But how can the Brothers claim a commitment to teaching as a lifelong vocation when in practice the reality is that classroom teaching is left to others? If sacrificing that element is demanded by the nature of a university, then the Lasallian university comes closer to being an oxymoron.

When we turn our attention from the Christian Brothers to the Christian Schools, there are two Lasallian criteria that we have to look at: Does the university fulfill a need? Does it offer a human education in a religious environment?

We can address the question of the religious orientation first because it is more concrete and easier to measure. The problem here is how to maintain an important role for religious instruction and religious values in a culture that is religiously pluralistic and increasingly secularized. With the collapse in this country of what some authors have called the cohesive Roman Catholic culture as distinct from the Roman Catholic religion, obligatory church attendance and required courses in Catholic or any other theology have disappeared from the colleges. That development certainly makes sense in a university setting. And I do not advocate joining the religious fundamentalists, whether Catholic or Protestant, who dream the impossible dream of returning to the good old days of a cohesive and monolithic religious culture.

The easy way out of the problems created by contemporary culture is to minimize the role of religion in the curriculum, as seems to have happened everywhere, while not much is done to encourage the teachers in all the disciplines to take up the slack, addressing the fundamental value questions that open the way to religious awareness. We are beginning to recognize in today's young people a surprising interest in spirituality, an opportunity that we have yet to integrate with the religious tradition of the college. The conclusion must be, therefore, that the Lasallian university is indeed an oxymoron if the religious dimension is allowed to erode and the integration of religion and culture is abandoned, especially if such matters are left to religion teachers or otherwise considered unnecessary or inappropriate at the university level.

When we come to the question of need, we may be coming close to the heart of the matter. I suspect when the oxymoron question was raised on this campus, there was probably some feeling that all this attention given to the Lasallian tradition, to define it, to preserve it, and to enhance it, may hardly be worth the effort. Does it make any difference? Is this trip necessary? The same question has to be asked by the Brothers, their lay partners, and all those ultimately responsible for directing the Lasallian mission toward any particular educational need. There is no question that our Lasallian universities in this country filled a vast vacuum when they were first founded, when the dominant presence of the Brothers assured their Lasallian character. Now that the influence of the Brothers is less apparent and less pervasive, this lends added weight to the question of the need that the university meets.

This question is rarely raised, the presumption being that the survival of our Lasallian institutions of higher learning is a desirable goal. Perhaps it is time to question that assumption. In recent general chapters, the international Institute of the Brothers is urging that the Brothers consider abandoning certain educational works to their lay partners, hopefully Lasallian, in favor of

moving on to areas where the need for a Lasallian presence is greater. In all of our American districts there are new initiatives to return the Brothers to the elementary schools in the inner city where the need for quality education is indeed great. As this movement continues we may well see the reverse of what happened in the last century, moving the center of the Lasallian mission away from university and secondary education to return to the new wave of poor immigrants in the city parishes.

I sometimes ask myself a well-nigh heretical question: If the Brothers were to disappear altogether from Manhattan College and all traces of the Lasallian heritage were to fade away, would it make any real difference? You could ask the same question about CBU. In a way, you are more obviously needed than Manhattan or La Salle in Philadelphia where the competition is intense, if not ruthless, and the differences among competing institutions minimal. Even so, the question is not so much the need for the university as such, but the urgency of maintaining its Lasallian character. Think, for instance of St. Louis and Washington D.C., or even Memphis for a number of years, where the Lasallian colleges were forced to close. The same is true of any number of high schools that the Brothers had to abandon. Can we apply the words of Ko-Ko in the Mikado, "They never will be missed, no, they never will be missed"? At least the question is worth asking.

So, we come back to the question. The Lasallian university: oxymoron or no oxymoron? The Lasallian university can become an oxymoron to the extent that the community in brotherhood is replaced by bureaucracy and compartmentalization, if teaching becomes less important than research or administration, if there is no real need to continue to survive as Lasallian, and if ways are not found to integrate religious values into the educational enterprise. The Lasallian university need not be an oxymoron if the Brothers and their lay partners maintain the tradition of the Christian Brothers to foster community in brotherhood and to prioritize excellence in teaching; it need not be an oxymoron provided the university maintains the tradition of the Christian Schools by meeting a specific educational need and integrates religious and human education.

I think now I have gone on long enough. Let the discussion begin!