

A Faculty View on Developing Faculty for Mission

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In late July of 1988 I drove through the state of Iowa, following my husband, Steve, who drove a U-Haul truck that contained everything we owned as well as our two sons, ages six and three. We were on our way to Holland, Michigan, a place my husband had never been and that I had seen only once. My one visit to Holland had been during an ugly late-January thaw. The most vivid visual memory I had of Holland was seeing ice-fishing shacks bobbing up and down in a lake of breaking ice. On this much different day in July, as we made our way from Bellingham, Washington, to the shores of Lake Michigan, it was Steve's turn to drive the boys, and my turn for respite, so I listened to a book-on-tape that I had picked up just before we left Bellingham. The story I was listening to as I drove was Isak Dinesen's *Babette's Feast*, a major theme of which is the consequence of choice and commitment—of roads taken and not taken. In the story, Babette prepares a feast for the community and at the feast one of the characters speaks to the assembly. His words have stuck with me since I first heard them because they seemed to be the words I most needed to hear on my journey to Holland and our new life there. Here is what he said:

Man, my friends, is frail and foolish. We have all of us been told that grace is to be found in the universe. But in our human foolishness and short-sightedness we imagine divine grace to be finite. For this reason we tremble. We tremble before making our choice in life and after having made it again tremble in fear of having chosen wrong. But the moment comes when our eyes are opened, and we see and realize that grace is infinite.

I needed to hear those words that day because I was carrying a load of very mixed reactions as we made our way to Holland and Hope College. I was grateful to have been offered a tenure-track job at what looked like a good college, and was excited to undertake a new adventure. But I also had some major apprehensions: Would my husband who, bless him, was moving for my sake, be able to find a position he wanted in the area? If he could not find something that was a good fit, would I be happy enough at Hope to make his sacrifice something more than pointless? Would Holland be a good place to raise my children? Would faculty duties at a liberal arts college allow enough family time to sustain a marriage and help my children thrive? Could I stand living without mountains? Could I survive winters with ninety-six inches of snow? Maybe I was making a terrible mistake. So I trembled, and I thanked God and Isak Dinesen for reminding me that grace was infinite.

Among the many apprehensions I carried with me to Hope were apprehensions about Hope College's religious connections. Their hiring process had addressed these issues to a certain extent; and I had also done some homework. I had, for example, looked up in the *Handbook of American Denominations* the Reformed Church in America, with which Hope College is affiliated. I wanted to understand Hope College before I agreed to teach there. I knew enough about the landscape of higher education to know that there are many Christian colleges at which I would not be welcome as a teacher and at which I would not want to teach. I consider myself an orthodox Christian, and I am in quite a few ways theologically conservative. But I knew that orthodoxy is in the eye of the

The mission of a college is like a perennial border, with many zones but no center, with numerous ways of being part of the whole.

beholder and that by some people's lights I do not qualify. I did not want to feel as if I'd be under continuing scrutiny to see how I measured up against an unfolding list of more and more specific and idiosyncratic doctrines. On the other hand, I knew that as an orthodox Christian, I would be viewed with suspicion in some colleges that prided themselves on their broadmindedness. During my campus interview at Wesleyan University, folks there were startled to hear that my husband was preparing to be a minister. At least Wesleyan, at that point in their history, was clear-headedly formerly church-related. I thought I would be more comfortable teaching there than at a place that mouthed Christian platitudes when it served its fundraising or recruiting purposes but had no interest in Christianity as more than useful window dressing.

Though Hope College had sent me materials about its church connection and the chair of the philosophy department and others had talked to me about this subject during the interviewing and recruiting stages, I felt a long way from knowing what I was getting into. I had read Hope College's documents, but I knew that texts (especially when crafted within an academic community) have unwritten subtexts. Hope said of itself that it was a liberal arts college "in the context of the historic Christian faith." What did that mean? Did it mean knowing what Nestorianism was and being opposed to it? Did it mean reading Genesis as a history and science textbook? Did it mean seeing process theology as heresy? Did it mean just appearing Christian enough to keep the donor-base happy? "Moral turpitude," to take another example, was listed as a possible condition for dismissal at Hope. What is that at Hope, I wondered. At some Christian colleges moral turpitude might include drinking alcohol, dancing, or divorcing; at others it might include nothing short of being convicted of a major felony. Other questions I had concerned the relationship of my discipline to the "Christian context" of the college. As a philosopher, I knew that many philosophical questions strike some Christians as dangerous. Would I be able to be a philosopher at Hope without getting poor student evaluations or being viewed as subversive by the administration?

I have indulged in this piece of autobiography in order to create empathy with the situation of new faculty members. All new faculty members know that they were chosen out of a pool of applicants as, in some sense of "best," the best available candidate. Each new faculty member has chosen to accept the offered position as, all things considered, the best option he or she has. If the recruiting and hiring process has been well-conducted, questions of "fit" will have been effectively addressed. But even a well-conducted hiring process will leave many questions unanswered. One part of what faculty development for mission can do in their early years is help new faculty understand "what they have gotten themselves into." It can help them grasp the institutional story behind the institutional buzzwords and to see themselves as part of that story. While I will address faculty development at all stages of professional life, these orientation aspects of faculty development can, if done well, help (or, if done badly, hamper) faculty attitudes toward all stages of programs in development for mission.

Another reason for reflecting on my beginnings at Hope is to remind ourselves of the great risks and the great stakes involved for new faculty as they commit to a new college. The issue of "faculty retention" has large financial implications for a college or university. Administrators know that if faculty members leave and need to be replaced, the cost of running additional searches is high. We are all aware, as well, of the drag on an institution caused by faculty members who stay at an institution even though they have become alienated, unmotivated or bitter. I think it is helpful to remember that the human cost of reconsidering a commitment to an institution is also high for many faculty members. Relocating, uprooting and re-rooting a family, and re-acclimating to a new institution are stressful, time-consuming and sap at one's productivity as teacher and scholar. Faculty members who have chosen to come to a particular institution want that choice to work out; they do not want to relocate again; they do not want to become alienated and bitter. Good faculty development programs can tap into this mutual good will to ensure that both faculty members and the institution have made the right choice.

Before turning to discuss strategies and program design, some additional ground clearing is in order. First, a comment on how I am going to be using the phrase "faculty development for mission." I am going to be using the term "mission" as a short way of pointing at the church-related nature of an institution and its Christian context, that is, those elements of an institution's identity that would set it apart from schools that would not be interested in church-relatedness for anything

other than, say, financial reasons. I will be using the term this way as a verbal convenience, but I think its usage has drawbacks. Most—perhaps all—liberal arts institutions aspire to be in the business of educating “the whole person.” For church-related liberal arts colleges and universities that will mean that academic programs, student life, all of the college’s support systems, and the Christian context of the college all aim at a unified mission. The institution does not have just a Christian mission or just an academic mission, nor can these be usefully seen as two modules that coordinate and run in tandem. Reality is much more organic than that. At times, this verbal shorthand may make it sound as if I think that the academic mission is not central, but that is not what I believe. One other verbal simplification is that I will often use “college” to mean “university or college” as a way of avoiding having to use the longer and more precise expression. Keeping these terminological issues in mind, let us turn to our main subject.

Faculty development for mission is aimed at furthering the Christian mission of the institution, but it needs to be more than goal-oriented. It should also be reflective about its vision and about appropriate means to reaching its goals. Faculty development for mission needs to shape its view of faculty and the means it selects for faculty development in accord with Christian values rather than the values of the marketplace. The first elementary point I want to make is that faculty development in a Christian context should avoid seeing faculty members as “human resources” in the reductive sense deplored by Martin Buber. If people are viewed as resources in the same way that the college’s real estate or capital equipment are seen as resources, Buber would accuse us of seeing them “not as bearers of a Thou but as centers of work and effort” to be utilized for institutional purposes. (*To Hallow This Life*, p.119). To see someone as a “center of work and effort,” and not as a “Thou,” is to see that person in a sub-Christian way. This is a sub-Christian view even if the work and effort they are being seen as centers of is supposed to have a Christian goal. If faculty development in church-related colleges and universities seeks to avoid using sub-Christian means to supposedly Christian ends, these development programs must acknowledge both the unique, unfolding individuality of each new faculty member and the distinctive mission of the institution. Faculty development for mission will seek to pass on the vision of the founding tradition of the institution and cultivate ownership of the mission of the college or university. At the same time, it will seek to help each new faculty member think clearly and creatively about what her specific strengths, gifts and interests are and how these can best be cultivated within the context of the institution’s mission. Faculty development programs in a Christian context should not seek to manufacture clones. Rather, they should help each faculty person discern how to be her best self as she “grows where she is planted” in her particular institution.

In striving to think in a fully Christian way about faculty development, it is helpful to call on two theologically informed organic metaphors that come out of the Christian tradition, one from the Apostle Paul and one from St. Therese of Lisieux. Church-related colleges and universities need to understand that they are not the Church, and thus are not themselves the Body of Christ, though the Christians who work within those colleges and universities are members of Christ’s body. Although Christian colleges are not churches, the Pauline passages about the nature of the universal Church as the Body of Christ can remind us of a helpful metaphor in thinking about the nature of our college faculties. Paul tells us that “as in one body we have many members, and not all members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body” (Rom 12:4-5). In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul emphasizes that those who have a particular function within the Body must not look down on others who have a different function.

In another organic metaphor for reflecting on variety among persons, St. Therese of Lisieux compares humanity to a garden. She says,

I saw that all the flowers [God] has created are lovely. The splendor of the rose and the whiteness of the lily do not rob the little violet of its scent nor the daisy of its simple charm. I realized that if every tiny flower wanted to be a rose, spring would lose its loveliness and there would be no wild flowers to make the meadows gay.

It is the same in the world of souls—which is the garden of Jesus. “He has created the great saints who are like the lilies and the roses, but He has also created much lesser saints and they must

be content to be the daisies or the violets which rejoice His eyes whenever He glances down. Perfection consists in doing His will, in being that which He wants us to be" (*Story of a Soul* p.20). This nineteenth-century Roman Catholic saint is often called "St. Therese of the Little Flower" because she saw herself as more like a violet than a rose. This metaphor of faculty development for mission as "gardening" can lead us to ask such questions as: How can we create the conditions that are optimal for growth of the differently gifted and varied individuals that make up our faculties? How can we cultivate a faculty culture in which all sorts of different ways of participating in the mission of the college are valued?

What practical difference would this gardening metaphor make as we think about designing and implementing faculty development for mission? One very natural way of thinking about faculty development for mission views faculty members at an institution as distributed among zones which represent differing degrees of commitment to and effectiveness for contributing to the Christian or church-related mission of the college. At the center are those who are fully committed to that mission and contribute effectively to it. Further from the center are those who are committed to the mission but under-equipped to contribute effectively to the mission. Still further out are those who are comfortable being on the faculty of a church-related college but who assume that the Christian mission of the college is someone else's job. At the margins of the faculty are those who are alienated from, and perhaps even bitter and hostile toward, the church-related or Christian aspects of the mission of the college.

If one thinks about faculty development for mission with this kind of picture in mind, it is natural to think that the goal of faculty development is to move people from the outer rings of this circle toward the center. The ultimate goal of faculty development for mission on this view would be to reach a point where every faculty member was fully committed and effectively contributing to the church-related mission of the college. Perhaps this goal is an unattainable ideal but, on this view, it is still worth striving for this ideal.

While there is something true about this picture, it is not without drawbacks. Jane Smiley's comic novel about university life, *Moo*, contains a chapter called "The Common Wisdom." This chapter sketches what different groups at Moo University "know." Among the things that are "well known" by the faculty at Moo are that

it was only a matter of time before all classes would be taught as lectures, all exams given as computer-graded multiple choice, all subscriptions to professional journals at the library stopped, and all research time given up to committee work and administrative red tape. It was [also] well known to all members of the campus population that other, unnamed groups reaped unimagined monetary advantages in comparison to the monetary disadvantages of one's own group, and that if funds were distributed fairly, according to real merit, for once, some people would have another think coming. (20-21)

Church-related colleges and universities often have an unhelpful "common wisdom" relative to how the administration views mission and faculty development for mission. Among the things that may be "well known" by many faculty members at a church-related institution is that some groups of which they are not part are the only ones viewed by the administration as making the preferred kind of contributions to the Christian mission of the college. Another piece of common wisdom may be that the administration has a very simple-minded and narrow view of the Christian mission of the college and that one can only be in the inner circle of the institution if one shares that simple-minded and narrow view. Given what we know about faculty, if the administration thinks and talks as though there is an "inner circle" of the college, will that make it more likely that most faculty members will aspire to be in that circle? Hardly!

Gerald Gibson, in his book, *Good Start: A Guidebook for New Faculty in Liberal Arts Colleges*, characterizes faculty as original thinkers with lots of drive, but drive that is used only when they genuinely believe in what they are doing. In work they consider valuable, faculty will organize themselves and see their projects through. In addition to being self-directed, faculty are also people "who can never be driven, [and can] seldom be led." One of the challenges facing any program of faculty development is that it is very difficult to make faculty members do anything in which they do not personally see value. You may require them to participate even if they do not recognize the

value of the event or program, but you cannot make unconvinced faculty participate in a way that will be effective toward institutional goals in faculty development. Because of this, it is important to use good judgment about what to make optional and what to make an expected part of campus-wide faculty expectations. Reinhold Niebuhr once observed that stressing duty only compels people to maintain minimal standards, but that people must be charmed into righteousness. Faculty members need to be charmed into caring deeply about the mission of their institutions. No faculty person that I have ever met will cheerfully sit still for being “enhanced” or “developed” into a kind of person that he or she does not aspire to be.

For all of these reasons, the way of thinking about faculty development for mission represented by the quest to move faculty towards the inner circle of commitment is likely to make the alienated even more alienated and the fence-sitters among the faculty more likely to jump off the fence on the side away from where the administration would like them to be. It is also likely to make those who think the Christian aspects of the mission of the college are someone else’s business more entrenched in this view. To talk in St. Therese’s language, many faculty members will say to themselves, “Those whom the administration sees at the center are the roses, but I am not a rose and never will be.” Or, to use Paul’s language, “The so-called ‘full contributors’ to the Christian mission at this institution are eyes, but I am not an eye.” The language of aspiration will only create anger, guilt or despair if what is held up as the norm or goal is something that not all faculty members believe they can and should become.

There are advantages, then, to changing our thinking about faculty development for mission, to having our thinking be informed by something more like a picture one might see in a gardening book as a guide to planting a perennial border. The perennial border has many zones, but no center. It discloses numerous ways of being part of a whole that is more valuable than the mere sum of its parts. In this way of thinking, the “big picture” of faculty development involves convincing faculty that the institution values a variety of ways of contributing to its mission, presenting the institution’s history and mission in a truthful yet winsome way, and helping faculty members explore how their particular gifts and histories equip them for a unique and valuable contribution to that mission.

By this point, you may be tiring of metaphors and wanting to get down to some specifics. You may also be suspecting that the view of faculty development that I am advocating is more suitable for what Robert Benne, in his recent book, *Quality with Soul*, calls “intentionally pluralistic” institutions, or for what he calls “critical mass” institutions. If your own institution is closer to what he calls an “orthodox” institution, that is, you have a hiring policy that requires all faculty to be Christians who subscribe to the same set of foundational beliefs, you may think that what I am saying has little relevance to you. But I think that this impression is misleading. I would be willing to bet that no matter what the hiring policy is at a school, the “common wisdom’s” scuttlebutt about the administration’s view is that some subgroup of the faculty constitutes the more valued inner circle of contributors to the mission of the college. There will be, and should be, variety within orthodox institutions, though it will be of a different degree and along different parameters than the variety within critical mass and pluralist schools. There is nothing inherently wrong with a rose garden or a tulip garden, though there would be something odd and lacking about such a garden if it had no variety within it, no range of early, middle and late bloomers, no range of colors, no mix of hybrids. Similarly, even before a school like Calvin College allowed the hiring of members who were not Christian Reformed, there was variety among its faculty—some, perhaps, wincing more than others at the anti-Catholic and anti-Anabaptist sentiments sprinkled through the Reformed Standards of Faith; some, perhaps, being great fans of Dooyeweerd; some thinking that nothing very profound had been added to theology since the days of Calvin. Analogous things about variety within relative homogeneity could be said of other orthodox institutions.

The bottom line I want to draw about theory before I move to practice is this: the boundaries of an institution should be drawn by its hiring policy and the hiring policy should be dictated by the institution’s conception of its mission. Whatever the hiring policy is, the philosophy underlying faculty development should be that variety within the recognized boundaries is a highly valued institutional good. The goal of faculty development for mission will not be to increase the homogeneity of the faculty, but to help each faculty person optimally contribute in his or her own unique way to the mission of the college or university.

Turning to the practical, I will begin the discussion of program design by discussing program design at Hope College and how that design has grown out of Hope College's nature and mission. Similarly, other programs should be responsive to and expressive of their own college's nature and mission. Hope College is affiliated with the Reformed Church in America. While it has many of the characteristics that Robert Benne attributes to what he calls "critical mass" institutions, its official hiring policy has, for at least the last two decades, been what I would call "purist ecumenical." Hope strives to hire faculty who are committed Christians, but outside of the upper administration and the religion department, it does not officially exercise a preference for Reformed Christians. We have no statement of faith to which faculty are asked to subscribe, but there is institutional accountability on the issue of commitment to the Christian mission. Faculty are asked to address how they see themselves contributing to the mission of the college as part of their evaluation for tenure and promotion to associate professor. The mission of Hope College is to be a residential liberal arts college of recognized excellence in the context of the historic Christian faith. The latest Vision of Hope College statement describes Hope as "ecumenical in character while rooted in the Reformed tradition."

That is what Hope officially is. Alongside this official story is the "common wisdom" of Hope's faculty. The "common wisdom" of Hope suspects that there is an inner circle, a preferred subset of the faculty who are Protestant evangelicals who strive to present an easy-to-delineate Christian worldview within which their discipline and all other disciplines should be seen. The preferred subset, according to the "common wisdom," uses language like "Jesus is my personal savior" and sprinkles scripture references throughout lectures on any subject whatsoever. The preferred subset's Christian worldview, so the "common wisdom" goes, entails no views on controversial social matters that would irritate conservative Republican donors to Hope College. The preferred subset does not swear; members of the subset go to Chapel regularly. The preferred subset's members are adept at extemporaneous public prayer and, if not abstainers, feel squeamish about smoking and alcohol consumption in public.

My goal in designing faculty development programs for mission at Hope College has been to take what Hope officially says about itself seriously. It is not enough just to say that the official story is true and that the "common wisdom" is false. It is how life is lived out at the college that will determine which of these is a more truthful narrative. So, I use acting in accord with the official story as a way of countering the "common wisdom." I want to counter the "common wisdom" both because I hope that it is false and because the "common wisdom" gives too many of our faculty a rationale for translating calls to "contribute to the mission of the College" into calls to "think and act like conservative evangelical Protestants," an agenda in which they have little interest. I will sketch some aspects of two programs I have designed and implemented as examples of what this taking the college at its word has looked like in practice.

Several years ago, Hope's Provost asked me to modify a workshop that I had done for Lilly Fellows applicants and run it as a summer faculty development seminar at Hope. The Provost's perception of my work was running a workshop on "integrating faith and learning." I, however, avoided using this language, because this phrase is perceived by many of our faculty to be Reformed and evangelical and, as such, foreign to their own ways of proceeding. It is language which tends to reinforce the "common wisdom" about the preferred subset, so I avoided it.

I put out a general invitation to apply to participate in the workshop. As part of that general invitation, I stated that if the number of applicants exceeded capacity I would give preference to people who had not previously participated in workshops connected to the Christian context of the college. Suspecting that I would receive more response to the general invitation from evangelical and Reformed faculty than from others, I actively encouraged individuals on the faculty who were from other denominations and at various places on the theological spectrum to apply. Knowing that in the past faculty in the Science Division and in the Arts Division at Hope had participated in fewer numbers in this kind of faculty development opportunity, I also cultivated potential applicants from those areas. In recruiting participants, I did not indicate that the people I talked to should participate because they had a special need for development in this area; instead I urged them to participate because I really wanted a voice like theirs in the conversation on these matters. In making the final selection from the applicant pool, I sought to get as much variety along disciplinary, denomi-

national, and theological lines as I could. My goal was to have the seminar embody the principle that Hope is ecumenical while Reformed, and to undercut the idea that there is a privileged inner circle at Hope. I wanted to widen the circle of those who participate in faith-related faculty development opportunities at the college.

I will describe two assignments and discussions from this seminar and sketch their rationale. One of the first things that participants were asked to do was to read short excerpts from John Henry Newman and Jimmy Carter, two people of faith who are significantly different from one another. To begin our discussion, I drew an axis with "community" at the top and "individualism" at the bottom; "reason" on the left and "experience" on the right. We first discussed where Newman and Carter seemed to be located within the space created by these axes in light of what we had read. This opened up a discussion of what we had read and allowed us to voice the various meanings that we ascribed to the four terms that defined the space. It also got two very different examples up on the board. I then asked each of the participants to go up and mark their initials within the space where they would locate themselves, and to explain why they would put themselves there. This had several beneficial outcomes. It allowed each participant to talk about how he or she conceived of the spiritual life and to do it in his or her own terms. They could be as self-revealing or as elliptical as they chose. It also became apparent that there was an enormous variety among us. People ended up all over the map. People found their differences interesting. This also gave us some context for understanding where people were "coming from" in our subsequent discussions.

A second example of an activity was an assignment dealing with the book *Models for Christian Higher Education*, edited by Richard T. Hughes and William B. Adrian. I asked each participant to read three sections of the book. Everyone was to read the section on the Reformed Tradition, because of the college's Reformed identity. Each person was to read the section on the tradition in which he or she had been raised or currently most identified with, and each was to select and read a section on the tradition about which he or she knew least. Then, we discussed their reactions to what they had read and also whether they thought that what had been said about higher education in the Reformed tradition had seemed to be applicable to what they saw around them at Hope College. Many participants indicated that they had learned things that were new to them in reading the section on their own tradition. During discussion, they had a chance to say more about their own experience of their various traditions and how these colored how they conducted themselves as teacher/scholars. They also had a chance to talk about their perceptions and experience of Hope College and how they saw themselves fitting into the college's mission. Structuring the reading and discussion in this way embodied Hope's Reformed, yet ecumenical, nature.

I will give one more brief example of faculty development from a somewhat different kind of program. This was a yearlong series of conversations and public events co-sponsored by the Rhodes Regional Consultation on the Future of Church Related Colleges and Hope's Provost's Office. The program had several components, and I will describe only one. This was a series of conversations among twelve participants and me (as facilitator) along with four public panel discussions called "Faculty Perspectives on Hope." I recruited the twelve participants in a way similar to that used in the earlier summer workshop. I strove to get as much variety as I could along disciplinary, denominational and theological lines. In this case I also strove for a spread of junior to senior faculty and ended up with a group that included two third-year faculty and two faculty within two-years of retirement, as well as many points in between. We met several times as a group of thirteen. Among the subjects of our discussion was the Covenant of Mutual Responsibilities, which is a one-page statement of the responsibilities of the denomination towards its colleges and of the responsibilities of the colleges toward the denomination. Examples of responsibilities of the denomination are to give the colleges full freedom to pursue truth and to urge their children to attend the church's colleges. Examples of responsibilities of the colleges are to fearlessly examine the words and works of God and humanity while recognizing that all truth is God's truth, and inspiring students to lives of reflection and service. Although this document was approved by both Hope College and the Reformed Church in America in the mid-sixties, most of the faculty in the group had not seen it and did not even know that it existed. Many of them found in it an interesting and exciting conception of what a church-related liberal arts college should be.

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After several discussions among all thirteen of us, I divided the group into three task groups to plan and staff three panel discussions on topics relevant to the Christian context of the college. In setting up these subgroups, I tried to get the same kind of range and variety that the whole group displayed, so that each panel would include voices that a wide range of our faculty could identify with and so that there would be interestingly differing perspectives presented. One example of a topic for the panels was the question of whether there was a tension among all the roles that Hope College faculty are expected to play as Christian scholar/teachers. These panel discussions modeled in front of the College community as a whole that variety among faculty is an institutionally valued good.

As I reflect upon these programs, here are some of the principles that underlay and informed them: Design faculty development programs that not only contribute to, but embody, the official mission of the College. Design faculty development programs that counter unhelpful aspects of our campus's "common wisdom." In promoting faculty development opportunities in this area of mission, avoid institutional buzzwords that may make some members of the faculty feel that they are not part of the "inner circle." Strike an appropriate balance between bringing people "up to speed" on the institutional and denominational story and allowing people to say who they are and share their experiences. Design faculty development opportunities that widen the circle of voluntary participation in conversations about the mission of the College.

Using these principles can help us to design settings where people can be charmed into loyalty to our institutions as we give them the time (and the institutional permission to use this time) to listen and learn from one another. William Willimon and Thomas Naylor in their book, *The Abandoned Generation: Rethinking Higher Education*, remind us that

Real communities are concerned with being—not having. Their members are committed to sharing, caring, and participating rather than owning, manipulating, controlling, and possessing. Open communication and commitment to the shared values and common purposes of individual members are critical to the stability of learning communities. If we want friendship to be the basis of our life together we must foster those settings and opportunities where there can be much conversation and conviviality. (148-149)

College administrators have the privilege of using the resources at their disposal to make that friendship of community happen. What a great gift that would be, most directly to faculty but also, indirectly, to our students.

Let me conclude with a final postscript about organic metaphors for faculty development. Some may be thinking that these metaphors as I have discussed them paint too idealistic a picture to be useful. Perhaps you are thinking of some particular faculty members at your institution who seem to have a negative relationship to the mission of the college. Isn't part of gardening dealing with the weeds as well as cultivating a wide variety of flowers? I do not want to discount the fact that there may be extremely difficult situations that administrators need to deal with in which a particular faculty member just is not "working out." But, especially in the context of faculty development, it is best to remember Jesus' parable of the weeds and wheat. The parable teaches that weeding can do more damage than leaving the weeds and the wheat to grow together (Matt. 13:24-29). One reason that some faculty members become bitter is that they suspect that they are viewed as weeds by their administration. What if a faculty culture could be cultivated in which each of those faculty saw themselves as valued for being the particular kind of flower that they are? One person's weed is, after all, another person's wildflower. Maybe their kind of flower needs the PH of its soil adjusted, or to be moved to a more sunny location. Faculty development for mission involves attention to what each variety among our faculty members needs to flourish at his or her own institution. 🌱