



# How and Why Christian Higher Education Must Change<sup>1</sup>

---

Ted Ward

For those who have pondered George Orwell's warning against a technocratic end of human freedom, "1984" has a fateful sound. The year "1984" has been ringing in our ears since 1949, when Orwell's novel hit the English-speaking world. We were Wheaton students then, and 1984 seemed far away. Orwell saw thirty-five long years ahead and we couldn't take him very seriously. Besides, people aren't so stupid as to let technological power fall into the hands of a dictatorial oligarchy. Surely not. That was twenty-two years ago. When the "Class of Fifty-One" (whose grey hairs and obesity have been gathered and honored this week) left Blanchard Hall we could hardly see so far ahead as our own children being in college. But our children are here; we can see it better now. And, just completing third grade this year, in classrooms all over the world, are our youngest children, the class of 1984. Was Orwell right? Now we feel the question in a new way. We are well over half-way to the fateful year. How far have we come technologically? Is Orwell's 1984 feasible in the light of our sophistication in 1971?

Walk through one day with me, the twenty-four hour period in which I began this manuscript: my determination to begin writing on my assigned topic was triggered by a glance at the object mounted on the wall behind the lobby desk at a small hotel near Columbia University. It was very calm and very quiet, in the lobby—only the shuffle of an aged night clerk and a whirring sound from the gently oscillating box on the wall. The box had a large eye and it was looking at me. In 1951 I might have been more shaken, but in 1971 the watchful eye is almost commonplace—in banks, in shopping centers, in rest rooms, at hotel desks, at swimming pools. We accept it. Surely it is in our own best interests—law and order, you know. That's what Orwell's Big Brother said, too!

The next morning began with a conference in mid-Manhattan, during which six of us brought into participation two other men sitting elsewhere in their own respective offices. We talked with them and they influenced our discussions though they were many miles away. Commonplace. That's what Orwell said. As the conference began to reach termination, I passed a note to one of the secretaries who then left the room. In the five minutes of her absence she had given my name to a computer that determined that I would be allowed to travel to Washington, D.C. on an airplane departing in just one hour. Tremendous!

But wait, the computer she tied into by phone line is also tied into another computer that is able to tell her if I paid my income tax on time, how much the United States Government paid me in consultation fees last year and how much I earned from foreign governments and the United Nations. Another linked computer could tell her and the New York City Police and the F.B.I. when I last was in Czechoslovakia and the opinion of an Army Intelligence Officer about my public Criticism of the role of the Chicago Police and the Illinois National Guard in the 1968 Democratic Convention riots. The gap between using these computers to get a plane reservation (1971) and

---

<sup>1</sup> Ted Ward (Alumnus, 1951). How and Why Christian Higher Education Must Change: *Wheaton College 1984*. Prepared for class reunion of class of '51, June 10, 1971

using the same hook-up to forbid my leaving Manhattan (1984) wouldn't take more than two months to close if some high authority (and not necessarily an elected authority) decided to use them this way.

Whether or not 1984 develops as the nightmare that Orwell describes depends on good will among men, development of responsible governments in key countries of the world, and the grace of God, though not likely in that order of significance. Freedom, as we know it today, and as it has been idealized in American heritage, may be close to its end. The mechanisms are all set up. As you read Orwell, you notice that all we lack is the legal restriction on sexual activity, and you don't have to be very imaginative to see the basis for even that coming into being—especially since it is so clear that today's sexual freedom and perversion, as well as overpopulation itself are severe threats to law and order. We seem already to be in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) with its dependence on drugs, genetic manipulations, and behavioral amorality. Can 1984 be far beyond?

Perhaps I get carried away. I'm tempted to write another book, a social criticism entitled "1984: Minus 13 and Counting." The assignment was to deal with *Wheaton College 1984*. That assignment demands a backdrop or scene-setting reminder of the similarity between Orwell's prophecy and the technological capabilities of our day. What will be the moral force that keeps the technologies oriented toward some semblance of common good, toward some sane view of human worth and dignity? The question demands two sorts of answers, one dealing with the foundations of ethics and morality that give rise to the human being as worthy and responsible, the other dealing with the educative processes through which such values can be brought to bear on the development of the larger number of people who constitute the citizens of 1984. For better or worse, this paper is limited to only a part of the response to the second question.

Two specific disclaimers are necessary: first, I do not intend to engage in crystal-ball speculation about the future. What little we can say about the future of American society and its institutions is said on the basis of projections of present trends and evidence, proposed in terms of probabilities (rather than certainties) and described in terms of alternatives subject to the vagaries of human intervention. The second disclaimer concerns an arbitrary restriction that I imposed upon this paper: although some of the most crucial circumstances and decisions that will affect the shape of Wheaton College, 1984 concern finances, I am neither sufficiently specialized in the field of higher education finance nor allowed here sufficient time to prepare and present both the curricular-conceptual and the financial sides of the issues.

Although finances are crucial (the plain facts are that if the economic, and fiscal charts continue on the present trends, there will be no Christian colleges in 1984), we cannot expect long-range solutions to result from financial alterations alone. Overconfidence in the tactic of buying one's way out of a dilemma is very American but very futile.

Impending financial calamity should be taken as the final challenge to philosophical and operational reexamination. But creative alternatives are less likely to be recognized under duress, so we had best be about the business of reexamining old assumptions, traditional ways and lazy habits *before* the mortgages begin to foreclose.

## The Revolution is Ending

Electronic technology, and most particularly communication technology, has brought about a revolution of similar gravity and even wider consequence than the Industrial Revolution. Hardly a human being in our day is exempt from the consequences of the staggering changes in institutions, communities, nations, and personal life-styles being brought about by the sudden shrinkage of social, international and cultural distances. Communication technology is the major force of the contemporary revolution even as the steam engine was the prime force of the last major upheaval of worldwide social and cultural systems. But since accelerating social and technological change has been the continuous characteristic of the Twentieth Century, we are largely insensitive to the truly revolutionary effects of innovations in electronic communication since mid-century.

I am convinced that we have just lived through one of the major hinge-points of human history. Just as a door ajar swings with the breeze, human destiny hangs ajar, to be inexorably pushed in one direction or another by the first strong force to adequately come to its senses after the shocks of the revolution. When I first read Orwell's *1984*, my fellow graduate students and I could hardly take it as a serious attempt to be prophetic. We kept telling ourselves that technology might some day make it possible to *do* the sort of things that were described by Orwell, but people would never *want* to do those sorts of things with the technology; most especially people would never *let* others bring them to such a point of willing enslavement—barring some sort of world-wide revolution. Barring some sort of world-wide revolution, I remember now, that's what we said. I am no longer a doubter. The communication revolution has happened—and its waves of effects will continue to echo and re-echo into the remotest by-ways of the world. Its primary artifacts are 1) instantaneous audio-visual communication, 2) electronic storage, retrieval and remote display of information, and 3) world-wide (galaxy-wide?) interconnections of these systems. Woe unto those who fail to recognize power in these artifacts!

Some of the immediate consequences of these artifacts lie behind shifts in values and relationships in our basic institutions. For example, it is no mere coincidence that the "generation gap" affects the home, the school, and the church in many of the same ways. The home, the school, and the church are no longer the major sources of information for youth in our country. And suddenly the classical institutions stand helplessly at the sidelines while an unprecedented epidemic of narcotic addiction sweeps across the scene. I am not suggesting anything quite so silly as that television and computers are responsible for the narcotics, but there is a relationship: impersonal communication has steadily encroached on personal communication; impersonal (mass) communication can shape values but is relatively ineffective in bringing a person to a given decision point in a predictable and timely manner. Thus, as mass media have supplanted the classical institutions of human interaction, those institutions (including the home) have lost much of their influence; as a consequence, young people today are left with peer influences, and very little else, to draw upon when confronted with important issues such as drugs, sex, aspirations, and purpose in life.

Alvin Toffler has described the present dilemma as well as anyone. But what Toffler describes in *Future Shock*<sup>2</sup> will certainly prove to be a transitional stage. "Information overload," the inadequacy of filtering mechanisms, and the inability to cope are the sorts of problems that will stimulate human

---

<sup>2</sup> Alvin Toffler. *Future Shock*. Random House, 1970

mechanisms. Humans are virtually outmoded already or else they are on the threshold of important changes in themselves.

The Wheaton College that is worth projecting into 1984 is one where these new adaptive processes can be stimulated and accommodated, not resisted.

For such a time as TOMORROW . . . plan to help  
Wheaton continue the same important work that helped  
you find your place of usefulness "For Christ and His Kingdom."<sup>3</sup>

There is a serious hazard in this view of the College in the future. It is likely that the nature of the "important work that helped you find your place of usefulness" was never as uniformly successful as we would like to believe. Further, the *present* confronts us with problems for which past methodologies are hopelessly inadequate, and to assume that the future can be adequately faced through the preservation of "the same work" as the past is folly. We must have responsible long range planning, not fond backward gazing.

Britain's leading expert on American higher education, Sir Eric Ashby, Master of Clare College, Cambridge University, observes that there is no longer a consensus on the goals of higher education in the United States. This breakdown, as Ashby sees it may very likely lead to a repression of freedom of thought. Shades of 1984! Ashby's predictions have substantial implications for Wheaton College as decisions are made within the next three years that will determine whether or not there will be *Wheaton College, 1984*. Sir Eric has an enviable reputation for accurate predictions. If higher education in the U. S. remains on its present course, Ashby sees the following consequences:

1. Universal access by the year 2000, with an estimated enrollment of about 16 million students in some form of higher education.
2. One in six of these students (if colleges in the year 2000 are no more attractive to youth than they are today) attending unwillingly; and at least half of them dropping out.
3. This 'semi-drafted army' of students will be taught by about 900,000 members of a profession whose prime duty is to teach, but whose teaching load is apt to be inversely proportional to their distinction.
4. Unless some unforeseen factor eliminates it, a streak of frustrated aspiration will run through the whole system. Two-year colleges will strive to do academic work, four-year colleges will itch to set up graduate programs. And, at the pinnacle, a few world famous institutions will be committed to the costly obligation of preserving their supremacy.

If appropriate changes are made in time, he suggests three other possibilities:

1. A moratorium on expansion, by replacing the socio-economic barriers with barriers of merit and motivation. If this happened, massive funds might be put into raising the level of secondary education . . . High schools might be the terminus of full-time education, except for those who need, or want, to go to college for some clear purpose. . . .

---

<sup>3</sup> Alumni Fund: "For Such a Time' as Tomorrow Wheaton Will Continue to Accomplish God's Purposes" undated, 1971

2. A successful disruption of the system and its replacement by something quite different (what, nobody knows).
3. Identifying the dangerous features in this sombre prognosis and . . . eliminating these systematically by slow evolutionary change.<sup>4</sup>

An excellent study of the problems of contemporary higher education, and the possibilities for solutions within the decade, has been published by the U. S. Office of Education. Among the criticisms documented by the study are the following:

1. Widening access to colleges and universities can accomplish little without major reforms in the present system. Fewer than half of those who enter college complete two years of study, and only about one-third complete four years.
2. Diversity is disappearing as colleges and universities become larger, more tightly structured, and bureaucratized. The forces that make for conformity to a single academic pattern continue to grow. And this is happening at a time when the demands on higher education requires *greater* diversity.

James Cass summarizes the report as focusing “ . . . on means for enhancing learning, on ways in which institutions can be shaped to serve the needs of individuals more effectively, on the necessity for developing many different approaches to learning so that the diversity of individual talents and aspirations can be met”.<sup>5</sup>

### **Survival Depends on Change**

There are so many problems and so few solutions. You can take either an optimistic or a pessimistic stance and build similarly face-valid cases about what the next 13 years will bring. Those who take their primary hope in the imminence of “the last days” are able to build a convincing case. If the compounding of all the classical problems resultant from evil and a whole host of new problems resultant from technology is any indicator of the end of the age, then there are pretty good odds that we have had it. The only worthy matter for discussion would be survival with honor until the end comes. Our topic today should be *Wheaton College, 1974* rather than *Wheaton College, 1984*.

But those who are aware that there have been other calamitous moments in history from which humankind’s survival seemed unlikely, can build a case for a new era and humankind’s survival into it. I count myself among such persons; for it seems to me that the best state of readiness for the end is to be engaged responsibly in preparation for the future. Either way, we win. The human being is marvelously adaptive. Both the organism and the spirit are able to survive, and even to flourish under the most unlikely of conditions. Whether through technological interfaces with the environment, as in undersea labs and lunar exploration, or through specially attuned life-styles, as in the Eskimo and desert nomads, adaptability, over the long haul, is a dominant human characteristic.

Thus it is reasonable to expect that within some fairly short period a major shift in life styles and values, perhaps even a shift in temperament, will make the technological person more able to cope with the pressures and complexities of the universe after the communication revolution. I do not minimize the desperate condition of the day. Awareness of what is going on today clangs into our brains, sometimes unbalancing our judgment. Awareness of the immediacy of calamity produces a

---

<sup>4</sup> Sir Eric Ashby. *Any Person, Any Study*. McGraw Hill, 1971

<sup>5</sup> James Cass. What Higher Education is All About. *Saturday Review*, May 22, 1971.

weird sense of responsibility and preoccupation with guilt for having helped to create this web we have been caught in. It especially stings Americans. We are suffering the withdrawal symptoms of our nation's 200-year ego trip.

Serious questions are being raised whether higher education as we have known it can or should survive for another decade. The reformers point out that the educational establishment has become a grotesque beast, unresponsive to human needs and motivated only by its own self-preservation. Their extreme statements contain disquieting elements of truth. By definition, the sociological value of an institution is to preserve, maintain, and perpetuate; thus in a period of time when the greatest need is for ways and means of helping people cope with the post-revolution realities, educational establishments, in general, predictably and irritatingly are hung up on yesterday's paper dolls.

Among the current critics of the educational establishment: Paul Goodman, Charles Silberman, John Holt, and others, is one giant, Ivan Illich. Here are two of his disquieting observations:

The production of inferiority through schooling is more evident in poor countries and perhaps more painful in rich countries. In the United States, the 10 per cent with the highest incomes can provide most of the education for their children through private institutions. Yet, they also succeed in obtaining ten times more of the public resources devoted to education than the poorest 10 per cent of the population. In Soviet Russia, a more puritanical belief in meritocracy makes the concentration of schooling privileges on the children of urban professionals even more painful.

But most people acquire most of their insight, knowledge, and skill outside of school—and in school only insofar as school in a few rich countries becomes their place of confinement during an increasing part of their lives. The radical de-schooling of society begs, therefore, with the asking by cultural revolutionaries of the myth of schooling, it continues with the struggle to liberate other men's minds from the false, ideology of schooling—an ideology that makes domestication by schooling inevitable.<sup>6</sup>

The search has begun in earnest for viable options to the present systems of formal education. A newly-established Commission on Non-Traditional Study, sponsored by the College Entrance Examination Board and the Educational Testing Service, Princeton, has been granted \$140,000 by the Carnegie Corporation to find new ways to increase access to and recognition for post-secondary non-collegiate learning. Chairman Samuel B. Gould points out that "Higher education today is clearly not meeting the needs of the changing social structure."

### **Tomorrow Belongs to Those Who Plan**

Perhaps the most important advice to give *within the establishment* is to pay close attention to the out-front leadership of the establishment and not to be sluggish about making improvement through change, no matter how painful. Sound thinking and careful writing about the needs for improvement of higher education is readily available. Following is a sort of digest of some of the leadership that might make it more likely for an institution such as Wheaton to be around to celebrate its 124th birthday. Higher education, in general, is being challenged to become more effective. Collegiate learning experiences should take on the attributes following:

---

<sup>6</sup> Ivan Illich. The False Ideology of Schooling. *Saturday Review*, October 17, 1970

1. *Personalized*, to develop humane, sensitive people who can counterbalance the depersonalization of complex, cybernetic living and create a sensitivity to human aspirations, potentialities, and problems.
2. *Multicultural and international* to educate true pioneers in developing the frontier of human relations.
3. *Interdisciplinary*, to strengthen the application of any one discipline by relating it to the structures and processes of other disciplines.
4. *Dispersed and diversified*, in its objectives, methods, instructional resources, and ways of assessing individual performance.
5. *Theoretical* and, concurrently, *clinical*—to create conditions where theory and practice interact to enrich each other, where theory provides an adequate conceptualization and understanding of the processes and practice wherein theory can be tried and tested, interpreted, and made meaningful.
6. *Flexible*, in terms of entrance and exit, able to accommodate various levels of performance relative to knowledge, skills, processes, and attitudes, but providing appropriate and respectable alternatives to the “whole degree” approach.
7. *Self-correcting*, through a systems approach to rational decision-making, monitoring and assessment, and incorporation of needed change.
8. *Cybernetic and futuristic*, to help students prepare for future change, while living effectively today in a manner which enables them to continuously broaden their minds and aspirations through the technological advances of today and projections of tomorrow’s promises, and helps them prepare for productive living today and in the emerging future.
9. *Meaning and quality oriented*, to develop students who will lead societal efforts to secure:
  - a. Quality, rather than quantity;
  - b. Person-values rather than a “things” orientation
  - c. Understanding and personal meaning, rather than mere knowledge mastery;
  - d. Group identity, effectiveness, and productivity, rather than blatant individualism;
  - e. Development and wise use of human- natural-manufactured resources, rather than mere consumption and manipulation;
  - f. Human and societal efficiency and productivity, rather than mere technical and organizational efficiency—in short, to be concerned with *quality* of life rather than merely its length and affluence.<sup>7</sup>

Students mean at least three things when they talk about lack of relevance and quality. First, many students today are critical of the lack of opportunity to engage in action based on what they have learned within the course structure. They comment on the fact that they have not been asked to participate in activities which would facilitate the learning of complex material. They want to engage in applications of course work in order to test their understanding and to enhance their application of theories.

Second, students sometimes charge a lack of relevance and quality because material is presented primarily at an abstract level. When the professor does not help the student to project plausible applications, the student may not see the value of the material. If the instructor is inclined toward abstract presentation, it may be that he or she is taking for granted that transfer to many specific situations is already clear to the student.

---

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from a review of the premises that are basic to contemporary programs for improvement of professional education by Joel L. Burden, Director of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, Washington, May, 1971.

Third, the charge of lack of quality and relevance sometimes reflects frustration with grading which rests entirely on traditional examinations. Command of information in a form which permits one to perform well on examinations does not insure that actions can or will be taken in other contexts in accordance with the information. Observation of behavioral actions taken by students would be a preferable basis for evaluation in many instances. Courses that are only one term long look like one of the contributing flaws. Analysis of the existing spectrum of courses, major requirements, and curricula should be a continuing process, but just now it should focus on the need for increased variety of instructional and evaluating procedures within the course. Learning and instruction can take on very different forms in courses lasting through the full academic year. The conditions for learning might be improved by offering fewer separate courses.<sup>8</sup>

Year-long courses, involving comprehensive mixes of theory and application, cognitive learnings and field experiences may provide part of the solution for the problems of relevance and quality.

A careful demographic study and projection of academic manpower recently concluded that there will be a surplus of 2000 academic faculty members in the year 1985. Carter's study also indicates a long-term continuation of the shift of financial provision for higher education away from state support toward local community college, district, and private support, including greater tuition burdens being carried by students and their families. In spite of all this, an even higher percentage of the 18-21 year-olds are predicted to be enrolled in some form of higher education at that time.<sup>9</sup> Time and space argue against developing these data more fully, but to the long range planner these data suggest one major conclusion: higher education will be very different by 1984.

One of many groups struggling to make sense out of the chaos of projections about the future is the 1985 Committee of the Professors of Educational Administration.<sup>10</sup> In their final report last year (the 1985 Committee makes its final report in 1970??) the committee suggested to its parent organization that "survival criteria" become the keystone in long-range educational planning. No more fanciful dreams—the issue is survival.

A recent Carnegie Commission study attacked the classical degree structure of American higher education. If even half of the recommendations of the Commission's study were implemented a college that lagged behind would shrivel and die. Surely here are some viable ideas as grist for Wheaton College's Long Range Planning Committee:

1. *Shortening the time required for formal education.* To shorten the time required for the B.A., the Commission suggests that high schools be accredited by state university systems and by consortia of private colleges to give the equivalent of the first year of work in college. . . .
2. *Providing more options.* The Commission favors opening more opportunities for youth in lieu of formal college and more stages at which college-going students can change direction, stop out to obtain a non-college experience; and drop out with formal recognition for work accomplished. The Commission recommends that service and other employment opportunities be created for students between high school and college, and at stop-out points in college. Among the opportunities suggested

---

<sup>8</sup> Based on findings reported to the faculty of Social Sciences, Michigan State University, by C. L. Winder, Dean, September, 1970

<sup>9</sup> Allan M. Carter. Scientific Manpower for 1970-1985. *Science*, 172: 132-140, 1970

<sup>10</sup> The "1985 Committee" of the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration: *Final Report* (Walter G. Hack, Chairman) Lafayette, Louisiana, August, 1970. To be published as *Educational Futurism, 1985*, McCutchan Publishing Corporation, Berkeley, California, 1971

are national, state, and municipal youth programs, short-term jobs with private and public employers, and apprenticeship programs. . . .

3. *Making educational opportunities more appropriate to lifetime interests.* More chances for reentry by adults into formal higher education, more short-term programs leading to certificates, and more stress on lifelong learning are urged. . . . Testing programs that enable students to obtain college credit for independent study; TV and radio college courses; and imaginative use of new instructional technology are only a few of many other promising developments that might be utilized. . . .

4. *Educational opportunities should be more available to more people, including women, employed persons, older people and persons from lower, income levels.* To promote life-long learning and extension of educational opportunity, the Commission recommends that all persons, after high school graduation, have two years of post secondary education placed in the bank for them to be withdrawn at any time in their lives when it best suits them. This could be accomplished . . . by providing no tuition or low-tuition community college within commuting distance of nearly all Americans . . . or by adding to social security a program for 'educational security' to be paid for through payroll taxes on employers and employees, with the benefits to be available on application after a period of sustained employment; or by making grants, work-study opportunities and loans available at any time during life; or by providing through employers and unions the opportunity for educational leaves; or by providing educational grants to persons following military and other service activity.<sup>11</sup>

Although the mission and role of the university is much more complex than that of a liberal arts college, leadership people in higher education learn to listen to each other. The way large secular universities are looking at contemporary problems tells something about the probabilities for future development.

Clifton Wharton, President of Michigan State University recently said,

On-campus education for our youth seeking a degree is not and should not be the sole educational function of today's 'pluralistic' university. Today, change is so rapid that human resources must continually be re-educated. We, in the field of higher education, have an obligation which goes well beyond the traditional education of late adolescents and young adults. Those among you who work with adults know the challenge of dealing with bright and mature people. This challenge is even greater when they want their educational experience closely shaped to the problems of the real world. We have scarcely begun to serve the adult segment of the population even though we have been in the business of education for well over two hundred years.

I strongly believe that 'Lifelong Education' is one of the most critical mass of higher education in the United States today . . . We must address ourselves to the needs and aspirations of certain groups -- groups who I call the 'educationally neglected.'

- the housewife and mother who . . . wishes to participate more fully in society.
- the middle-aged worker, who aspires to greater educational attainment as the key to economic and personal fulfillment.
- the retiree who, with a minimum of retraining and opportunity could become a marvelous contributor.
- the average citizen who feels the all-pervasive pressures of ever-accelerating change and who desperately needs a continuously updated education to enable him to cope with this dynamic world.

---

<sup>11</sup> Carnegie Commission of Higher Education: *LessTime, More Options: Education Beyond the High School*, McGraw-Hill, 1971

-- the alumnus who suddenly finds that the explosion in knowledge is making his prior education obsolete and who urgently needs an 'educational sabbatical' to update his skills and knowledge.<sup>12</sup>

Is there anything here for *Wheaton College, 1984*? I strongly suspect that there is.

### **Making the Next Thirteen Years Count**

The Wheaton College I would most value for the next thirteen years is one where the emphasis is much less on the technological and much more on matters of theological, philosophical, political and public policy development. Development of the Christian community and its proper influence on the welfare of the nation and its relation to the needs of the world is much more dependent on Christian leadership than on leadership of Christian laypersons. Although the kind of leadership I am talking about can use almost any career field as its platform, the Christian college in general, and Wheaton College in particular, needs to put first things distinctly first. And the first line of attack in the years just ahead is sure to be in the fields that are concerned with values and value-based decisions. The influence of well-educated Christians will be particularly important in communication, law, government, social science, and the arts. Physical science, engineering and medicine shape up as less crucial fields in the years ahead than they have been in the years just past.

The most promising view of *Wheaton College, 1984* that I have been able to get has a strange absence of freshmen and sophomores. I see the investment of precious and perhaps even more scarce resources concentrated on young men and women who have already demonstrated their academic competency at a junior college or at the State university. Wheaton might well make the current amount of investment in educational resources affect twice as many people if undergraduates were to spend only two years here. And if these twice as many people were more highly selected in terms of demonstrated competency rather than collegiate promise it would provide a much more significant base upon which to develop, a graduate school.

You may be aware that the issues I raise here are already being examined by administrators of the College and by faculty committees. Dean of the Faculty Robert Baptista has the courage to put it this way:

There are obvious problems and paradoxes when consideration is given to cutting expenses. Is it wiser to trim several programs or to completely eliminate one? How many academic majors should be offered? What academic departments are essential in a Christian liberal arts college? . . . there is no decision which, will please everyone.<sup>13</sup>

Asking these questions and honestly seeking the answers can significantly affect the probability that there will be a Wheaton College in 1984. One of the current hopes is for the development of cooperation and sharing among the major Christian colleges through a consortium. President Armerding has pointed out that such cooperation necessarily involves voluntary curtailment of curricular proliferation and a reduction of the sort of inter-institutional competition that costs more than it is worth.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., *The University's Quest for a Social Role*, The Michigan Academy of Arts and Sciences, April, 1971

<sup>13</sup> Robert Baptista. Share and Tell. *Wheaton Alumni*, June, 1971

<sup>14</sup> Hudson T. Armerding: Will Our Christian Colleges Survive? *Eternity*, June, 1971.

As for the graduate school, by 1984 it should be possible to tell with much more confidence whether it is dead or alive. Neglect will kill it, and I fear over-diversification will kill it. But to single out very carefully the two or three thrusts in which this College Can make a distinctive advance for the cause of Christ and thus to build high-quality graduate experiences would be a most significant contribution. High quality, in this case, entails cooperation with and among the many excellent graduate schools and organizations offering locations for field experiences within the Chicago area. It most certainly does not mean copying a yesterday-type cloistered sanctuary of dusty retreat from reality. The Graduate School at Wheaton is not a seminary, nor should it be. The significant need of which I am most aware is for a graduate center for the study of social and academic issues as they relate to the church, and for the study of Biblical aspects of human affairs and social-cultural development. Such a graduate school could provide wide, varied, and eclectic experiences, yet perhaps offer only two different degrees: a Master of Arts in Social Criticism and a Master of Arts in Biblical Studies. I am particularly encouraged about the potentialities in this sort of approach after my experiences on campus last fall. Surely there must be many other persons within graduate school faculties around the world who would be willing to engage themselves in seminar study of contemporary issues relating to their specialties during a term or two of leave from their regular work. I was stimulated and encouraged by the excellent scholarship and the quality of thinking that was characteristic of the upper division students in my two seminars at Wheaton.

A significant graduate school is not just a place where advanced courses are taught; it is a place where significant problems are solved. If Wheaton College intends to become serious about its graduate school it must develop means of becoming involved with other segments of the church to *work together* on finding solutions for significant problems. Thus the College must, through its graduate school, develop intensely traveled two-way streets to the rest of the world.

Admittedly biased, but completely responsible, is the view that the inter-disciplinary study of human communication constitutes the most promising contemporary field of inquiry for a graduate school concerned about the church of Jesus Christ. It is hard to imagine a greater contribution from the academic realm than that which could be made by *Wheaton College, 1984* through an intense program of cooperative research and training in communication theory and communication practice as it affects the entire spectrum of interactions of Christians with the world around them. Could there be a more significant institutional force than that of a theological, philosophical, policy-development focus mediated and related to the entire world through scholarly and practical dialogues by highly trained communicators? (For those who are as yet un-initiated into the view that communication is the common denominator of all human interaction, I hasten to explain that “highly trained communicator” does not denote a communication specialist or even a communication major. Instead, it refers to all Wheatonites 1984, who will necessarily need that significant and basic set of skills and understandings required for effective use of communicative processes. I see this area as an essential curricular experience for everyone associated with *Wheaton College, 1984*.)

In the post-revolutionary period of readjustment there is an extraordinary demand for development of public policy. One key protection against the ultimate arrival of Orwell's *1984* is appropriate public policy on the maintenance and use of computer-based data banks. Calling the threat of computers to the citizen's right to privacy “potentially extremely dangerous”, Arthur A. Miller, Professor of Law, University of Michigan, has just begun a study to develop a basis for codes and legal limits on the practices of information systems developers and users. His work is supported by \$160,000 from the National Science Foundation. Such studies and the wisdom that they generate are just about all that

stands between the great technological societies of 1971 and the society of 1984 that Orwell describes. Is the Christian community aware? Is leadership within the church able to address itself to these issues? Is there a Christian college or graduate School wherein the professors and the advanced students are involved in the research and participating on the national level in the development of such policies? The *Wheaton College, 1984* that seems most valid to me is one where there is *less onlooking* and *more shaping* of the conditions of the community, the nation, and the world. The withdrawn, timid, non-participating Christian colleges will be the first to go. Perhaps they should.

At the risk of losing two more of my remaining three friends, I must confess that my vision of *Wheaton, 1984* has several other unpopular aspects. First, in the interests of economy and institutional focus, certain academic areas may need to be eliminated entirely and others severely curtailed. Their roles and missions would be carried out within other schools to which Wheaton students would go for those parts of their studies. That the Christian community of America should increase its financial support of institutions (Christian colleges) wherein a decreasing fraction of the Christian youth are educated is debatable. That those institutions are spending a considerable portion of those contributed resources to duplicate services which tax dollars are providing elsewhere hardly strengthens the case! Although there is a general assumption that there is a particular Christian perspective for any given study, I have never found the particular emphasis that distinguished Christian counterpoint from secular counterpoint (to draw an example from my undergraduate major); nor have I felt that the Christian perspective fundamentally alters the basic materials of organic chemistry. Instead of bringing together a highly competent faculty of Christian scholars in all the many fields of human inquiry so that each professor will labor through the basics of his field with one little group of beginners after another, why not focus the professors' major efforts on the perspectives and issues?

One possible model of *Wheaton College, 1984* could be that of an institution given over to providing the "year away" for hundreds of Christian students who are otherwise enrolled in secular institutions. Such a year would not be concerned with the "basics" of the content fields, but would be concerned with the relationship of Christ and of the Word of God to the several broad fields of human scholarship. Such a year might include a carefully planned six-to-eight week experience at one of Wheaton College's overseas "field stations for cultural studies" to encourage a global grasp of the issues and the responsibilities of the Christian scholar in today's world.

Another viable alternative might be to divert a significant amount of faculty effort to off-campus teaching (for transfer credit), especially the teaching of seminars on the Christian perspectives of science, of social science, of the arts, and so forth, on the campuses or at least in the campus communities of major secular institutions. Let's face it, that's where the overwhelming majority of Christian young people are going to college now, and 1984 doesn't promise some miraculous ten-fold expansion of the Christian colleges to accommodate them.

### **A New View of the Alumni is Needed**

Although at the outset I indicated that this paper would not attempt to deal with the financial dilemmas, I would like to suggest to you and to the Board of Trustees a fundamental relationship between the alumni and the survival of Wheaton College.

Although the College treats its alumni and financial development programs as two separate problems and keeps the two groups of people out of fundamental interaction with each other, the alumni are

people, and they are significant: The college originally accepted them as students because of their evidenced educability! What has become of that educability?

The educability of its alumni is crucially related to the long-range strength of a college such as Wheaton. It is most unlikely that any significant number of graduates leave Wheaton College with a recognition and respect for the roles and the values of *both* public and private investment in higher education. In fact, I'm afraid that most college graduates are either/or people, unconvinced that mixes, combinations and middle grounds offer great strengths.

Lacking a deep sense of value for both the private and the public sector's stake in higher education, the alumnus offers the Alumni Association very little to build on other than emotion and warm memories. But emotions about one's alma mater are always mixed, and warm memories tend to cool. If graduates do not continue to develop intellectually after their college days, the Alumni Association must indeed beat a very dead horse. When Wheaton graduates become taxpayers (very likely most Wheatonites work their way into fairly comfortable middle-class roles), they become aware, perhaps for the first time, of the size and strength of the public higher education establishment. No less than the Catholic sector, there is a tendency today for Protestant taxpayers to revolt. The revolt hits first and hardest at the non-public schools. You don't have to write your district's legislator to get relief from the burden in the private sector, you just don't contribute. Here's the point: any college that intends to survive must treat its alumni as an educable group for which the college continues to take responsibility and in which the college continues to make an educational investment.

One of the objectives of this educative effort must be the understanding of the values and the necessity for an interrelationship between public and private sectors of the educational community. Another objective must be the continuing attunement of the educated Christian and the contemporary society. It is so painful to see the stagnation and sourness that oppresses the college graduates who have not developed intellectually since they doffed their mortar boards. Although those who become teachers and parents have strong stimuli to which they must relate, even they can become backward, defensive and reactionary if they are given no help in understanding the contemporary world. Though we, too, sometimes perplexed, often jolted, and constantly challenged, those of us who specialize in the fields of social and behavioral science are profoundly concerned about the estrangements that so easily develop between the stagnating and the reforming sectors of our society. The *Record* may already be the symbol of that estrangement: anxiety that the alumni will misunderstand and be offended by what the *Record* has become seems incredible to those of us who have been privileged to continue our own education since Wheaton days. Each time I arrive on campus I head for the *Record* office to pick up a handful of recent issues. I'm eager to hear that sort of voice.

I doubt that it is a voice of the majority, but I value the pushing of each other's ideas and the pushing of the establishment that the newspaper reflects. I think this sort of thing is appropriate and encouraging in today's world--it reflects *thinking* and it reflects an enlightened tendency to opt for inquiry and curiosity rather than for blind acceptance and conformity. Surely many students reflect immaturity and sometimes poor judgment, but what would be better? For them to hide the immaturity and the poor judgment until they finish growing up? Absurd. Yet this is exactly what some apparently influential people would prefer. To watch youth engaged in a process of searching is both offensive and threatening to those who have quit searching.

### Which 1984?

For those threatened by the bold challenges of today's youth it is thirteen short years to 1984. There is very little conceptual gap between reactionary doublethink in 1971 and the basic slogans of Orwell's Ministry of Truth."

WAR IS PEACE: "War *there* is acceptable since it permits peace *here*. But since we are peaceful *we* cannot declare our war, anyway!"

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY: "*Our* freedom is important—we have worked for it, fought for it; freedom is *our* right! Never mind *their* slavery."

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH: "Certain people should be left in ignorance lest they, through much learning, threaten our ways and our properties."

Two characteristics must pertain if Orwell's fearful prophecy is to come to pass. And four safeguards would go far toward offsetting the Orwellian tragedy:

Orwell's 1984 depends on . . .

1. Large numbers of people who think alike (suggesting educational experiences deficient in emphasis on analytic skills and deficient in valid bases for decision-making and evaluation); and
2. Large numbers of people who think they are thinking when they really are not (suggesting educational experiences largely built upon indoctrination procedures).

Wheaton College's 1984 depends on . . .

1. Valuing variety in educational approaches and experiences;
2. Valuing and respecting rather than suppressing cultural differences (suggesting an educational community in which highly contrasting lifestyles would be exempted from the "melting pot");
3. Emphasis on quality rather than quantity, but valuing as exemplars of quality those creative and idiosyncratic acts through which the world can be made different; and
4. Substitution of the Lordship of Christ for the tyranny of the Americanized, evangelicalized forms of piety.

Although I share with no one the responsibility for the flaws in this thesis, I am gratefully obligated to several members of the current student body at Wheaton College and to members of the faculty and administration. At my request, a number of valuable documents were prepared at Wheaton College to serve as a basis for shaping my ideas, and, in turn, this paper.