

EDITORS' COMMENTS

The religious identity of institutions of higher learning has been at the forefront of discussions of a number of denominational communities in the last decade. Catholic awareness of this issue is witnessed by the discussion that greeted the publication of Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* in 1990 and the Vatican-approved norms for its implementation developed by the American bishops. The publication of noted evangelical historian George M. Marsden's *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* in 1994 highlighted Christians' concern about the secularization of the academy in the United States. That work was followed by former University of Notre Dame provost James Tunstead Burtchaell's *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities From Their Christian Churches* in 1998. In this work, Burtchaell uses case studies of higher educational institutions of Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Catholic, and Evangelical persuasions to document what he claims is the loss of the connection between the sponsoring denominations and their institutions.

This issue of *Catholic Education* concentrates on the question of the religious identity of denominational institutions of higher education. It does so in two ways: first, by presenting essays from the Lutheran, Latter-day Saint, Seventh-day Adventist, Evangelical, and Catholic perspectives; and second, by a review of three of Marsden's works by Fr. James L. Heft, S.M.

The reader will also find an article on the mission of Catholic high schools, a review of research on the topic of homosexuality in Catholic schools, and two additional reviews of books on Catholic education: the first on *Catholic Schools Still Make a Difference*, an update of *Catholic Schools Make a Difference*, John Convey's groundbreaking effort on research on Catholic schooling that was published in 1992; the second an assessment of a book on the Alliance for Catholic Education, a teacher-preparation program developed at the University of Notre Dame in the 1990s.

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