

Introduction

In 1967, a small group of presidents and other Catholic university administrators convened at Land O' Lakes Wisconsin, a retreat and conference property owned by the University of Notre Dame. The International Federation of Catholic Universities had encouraged its national groups to meet and discuss the future of Catholic higher education, and under the leadership of Father Theodore Hesburgh, CSC, the Land O' Lakes Statement was born. The Statement has generated much controversy for more than 50 years and we do not intend to review the arguments on various sides of the debate in this volume of the *Journal*. What we do offer are two articles at the beginning of this issue that explore some of the history and implications of Land O' Lakes.

We begin with the analysis of Peter Folan, SJ, and Robert Turner, who discuss the effects of Land O' Lakes on the composition of boards of trustees at Catholic institutions. Noting the dwindling numbers of religious available to serve on these boards, and the rising number of lay-led boards, the authors propose a framework based on the writings of Saint Ignatius of Loyola that board members could implement in order to facilitate a robust decision-making process.

The second article related to Land O' Lakes stems from a symposium on the Land O' Lakes Statement held at Saint Louis University. Maureen Wangard presents fresh insights into the role of the principal animators of Land O' Lakes, Father Hesburgh and Father Paul Reinert, SJ, former president of Saint Louis University. Using archival materials, the author enhances our understanding of the motivations and contributions of these key players.

In recent years, the Humanities seem to have come under a good deal of skepticism concerning their value and "usefulness." Such is the case that some of the most prestigious liberal arts institutions, as well as many Catholic colleges and universities, have experienced declining student enrollments in the Humanities, no doubt due in part to broader cultural attitudes. Conor Kelly makes a spirited defense of the place for the Humanities at Catholic institutions by drawing on what he terms a "theology of institutions." The author suggests new ways to think about the distinct purpose of Catholic institutions, and then proposes a theological defense of the Humanities as a way to counter "utilitarian reductionism" and other cultural pressures.

Immersion experiences for students have become normative at academic institutions, whether Catholic or secular. On returning from these experiences, students often say that it was transformative and changed their lives. Richard Clark and colleagues wanted to know to what extent the 1.6 million students participating each year in immersion trips were affected long term. Looking at one program, the authors measured the effects on students' lives five years or more after travel to serve or learn from people on the margins. The findings suggest powerful repercussions on people's lives a considerable number of years after these experiences.

The final article in this issue is a collaborative work by a professor and student, addressing a critical-reflective approach used in an upper-level theology course. The article moves through three phases, first arguing that instructors need to help cultivate theological thinkers among students. Next, the authors suggest a theological framework, grounded in Liberation Theology¹ (particularly the writings of Ivone Gebara), as a way to help students think theologically. Finally, employing Gebara's concept of relatedness and relying on works by James Baldwin and Jean Toomer, professor and student demonstrate how secular thinkers such as those two noted artists "can offer both Christian and non-Christian undergraduate students an entrée to theological thinking."

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¹The publisher neither advocates nor condemns this movement.