

THE TEN PILLARS

FAITH AND REASON IN A GREAT CITY

A 12 YEAR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF HOUSTON
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

Preface to a Vision

This document contains Houston Baptist University's vision for the next 10-12 years. We have not limited our plans to incremental improvements, but have instead decided to reach for a space in American higher education that is almost unoccupied. We intend to build on our reputation as an outstanding, regional master's degree-granting institution to become a comprehensive national university firmly rooted in the Christian faith. Before we reveal our ideas for the future, I would like to first recall our beginnings.

In 1961, Stewart Morris and Rex Baker submitted the final draft of the preamble to the bylaws of what was then Houston Baptist College. One trustee described the preamble as the steel that makes the foundation of the university. The express desire of HBU's founders was to birth and nurture a university that would remain unequivocally wedded to the Christian faith. The current preamble, modified in only minor ways to reflect the transition from college to university and to be even clearer about the necessary Christian convictions of those who work for HBU, reads as follows:

Nature of the Institution

The Preamble to the University By-Laws as stated below describes the distinctive nature of the institution.

The Houston Baptist University is a Christian liberal arts university dedicated to the development of moral character, the enrichment of spiritual lives, and the perpetuation of growth in Christian ideals. Founded under the providence of God and with the conviction that there is a need for a university in this community that will train the minds, develop the moral character and enrich the spiritual lives of all people who may come within the ambit of its influence, HOUSTON BAPTIST UNIVERSITY shall stand as a witness for Jesus Christ expressed directly through its administration, faculty and students. To assure the perpetuation of these basic concepts of its founders, it is resolved that all those who become associated with Houston Baptist University as a trustee, officer, member of the faculty or of the staff, and who perform work connected with the educational activities of the University, must believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible, both the Old Testament and New Testament, that man was directly created by God, the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, as the Son of God, that He died for the

sins of all men and thereafter arose from the grave, that by repentance and the acceptance of and belief in Him, by the grace of God, the individual is saved from eternal damnation and receives eternal life in the presence of God; and it is further resolved that the ultimate teachings in this University shall never be inconsistent with the above principles.

Amended by the Board of Trustees

February 22, 1974

Our historic preamble continues to be the source of our vitality and inspiration. The central confession of the New Testament, as reflected by the preamble, is that "Jesus Christ is Lord." Such a claim has deep implications not only for the church, but also for the institutions of higher learning to which the church has given birth. The Gospels, Acts, the Letters, and the Apocalypse all bear testimony to the foundational assertion that the same Jesus who was crucified has now been vindicated by the covenant God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Furthermore this resurrected One is now installed on a heavenly throne expressive of His universal sovereignty. All peoples, tongues, and nations fall under the sway of His Lordship, whether acknowledged or not. He is the One through whom God made the world, by whom all things are reconciled, and unto whom and for whom all of history will find its consummation (Ephesians 1:10).

To say "Jesus Christ is Lord" is not merely to affirm a religious confession, nor to say something only about an interior faith or personal, individualistic values. Rather, to say "Jesus Christ is Lord" is to make a statement that touches not only the private spiritual lives of believers, but encompasses all of the ranges of the created order, including the scope and breadth, as well as the complexities, of social, political, emotional, and physical experience. He is Lord, not only of the church, but over all things visible and invisible (Colossians 1:16), and therefore there is no area of reality which is, or even can be, outside the sphere of His Lordship. For a university to express Christ's Lordship as a function of its academic mission is to embrace in principle, through research, teaching, and the learning community, all the questions, issues, and intricacies which curiosity and imagination can engender, from undergraduate through graduate experience.

Our vision for HBU brims with ideas, plans, and objectives, but we view it all as nothing if we follow the all-too-familiar path of gaining distinction at the price of the loss of our faith. For that reason, we have proposed a vision for a

Christian university and not a university that happens to have denominational trappings ancillary to the core mission. We aspire to nothing less than becoming a university whose learning environment challenges every member of the community to academic excellence and authentic spirituality, both of which are consequences of our central confession: "Jesus Christ is Lord."

Robert B. Sloan, Jr.
President, Houston Baptist University

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FAITH AND REASON IN A GREAT CITY

Introduction

The vision we have for our university begins with a story. It is about something that happened more than a hundred years ago.

In the autumn of 1900, there was a man who lived in a thriving city on the Texas shore. People came from far across the ocean to visit this growing city, as it was a rising center for commerce, innovation, and trade.

One day, with no warning – for these were the days before forecasts and radar – the winds became a wild thing, and the sea began to rise. A great storm was coming, and the people were not prepared.

The man and many of his fellow citizens took shelter at the courthouse where his father was a judge, behind the thick granite columns that held up the house of law, and prayed for the best. The rain fell, the flood waters rose, and the wind blew and slammed against the building. But the pillars held.

Today, you can see ten of those same granite columns at the center of the HBU campus, a gift from the survivor's son. Given in the fall of 1969 at the height of the Cold War and cultural upheaval in the United States, they are more than merely relics of the past. They are a constant reminder that our ability to weather fierce storms depends upon solid foundations, that people of wisdom build their houses upon solid foundations.

Little has changed since Christ first taught His parables about the wise man who built his house on the rock and the foolish man who built his house on the sand (Matthew 7:24-27). These are difficult and challenging times, a postmodern age when many build their lives on fleeting things and the latest fads. They do not build their lives on what lasts. They do not build their lives on the truth.

A great university does not leave students to be swept to and fro by the changing winds of the world. It does not merely place tools in the hands of the

next generation and then push them out only to serve the needs of the day. It equips them with something more meaningful. It gives them a place to stand when the great storms come. It guides them past the evanescent, toward the everlasting.

The Christian University Past and Present

Many universities call themselves Christian, but cannot bring themselves to talk about the central narrative of the Christian faith – the Incarnation, the Cross, and the Resurrection. Yet as Father Richard John Neuhaus has written, “If what Christians say about Good Friday is true, then it is, quite simply, the truth about everything.” The implications of such truths are worth studying and knowing to the fullest – truths we all must confront to have a life worthy of our Creator’s purpose.

The university has deep roots in the Christian church. Christian scholarship is as old as the faith. If anyone was ever a scholar, surely Paul was, surely Augustine was, and surely Aquinas was. That tradition of Christian scholarship gave birth to the great universities of Europe and to their younger American counterparts. Despite the ancient relationship between the church and the university, the past two centuries have seen the two grow ever further apart.

Today, universities that embrace the idea that faith and reason are partners in the quest for truth are few. Sadly, one need only visit the campuses of the great institutions of the past to see that they are now dominated by moral relativism and secularism – the magnificent old buildings may still have the Word of God engraved on their walls, but it has faded with time, and too often no longer represents the beliefs of those inside.

The institutions that once hoped, using Kepler’s phrase, “to think God’s thoughts after him”¹ trained the leaders who played crucial roles in the history of our nation. The great universities of the past, founded with few exceptions by faithful Christians, viewed faith and education as inherently connected. Their fundamental understanding of what John Erskine once termed the “moral obligation to be intelligent”² equipped America with the men and women who guided our nation through our greatest challenges. The Harvard of old, founded by a clergyman, could produce Cotton Mather, Horatio Alger, T.S. Eliot, and presidents like John Adams, who understood that “Liberty can no more exist

without virtue and independence than the body can live and move without a soul.”³

Yet, these universities have largely ceased to exist in their Christian forms. The Harvards, Yales, and Princetons have all left their Christian foundations behind. As late as the 1950s, administrators at Yale protested fiercely when a young William F. Buckley questioned the school’s Christian commitments.⁴ No such controversy would arise today.

One by one, the great Christian universities of the West left their religious identities behind. Some discovered they had hired faculty who cared little for the faith and were eager to abandon it. Others had no more interest in being faithful than was necessary to reassure nervous parents and alumni. Still more were simply bought out of their faith traditions by secular donors who offered large gifts in return for leaving ties to churches behind. A Carnegie fund offering pensions for professors once secularized twenty colleges at a time by conditioning receipt of the dollars on severing church ties.⁵

The result is that the great Christian university (especially among Protestants)⁶ is virtually nonexistent in America. Few rank with the best in the nation or have comprehensive offerings. Neither are Christian universities in the Protestant tradition truly in the business of producing Ph.D.s. As a consequence, the faculty we hire have almost always been educated in secular institutions. The Christian universities have failed to accept their responsibility to love God with all the mind (Matthew 22:37) at the highest formal levels of academe. During the past several decades, Christian higher education has compiled a distressing record of graduate students not trained, seminars not held, doctoral degrees not conferred, conferences not convened, and journal articles not written because of the severely limited capacity of Christian higher education in the wealthiest nation on earth.

There are many fine undergraduate Christian schools, universities that have maintained their ties to vibrant Christian communities and denominations. But these Christian universities are largely regional in their influence and limited to the undergraduate experience, though there may well be a few master’s degree programs provided. What is missing in American higher education, especially on the Protestant side, is the comprehensive university which takes the confession of Christ’s Lordship seriously.

By comprehensive, we mean that the university offers a full range of programming, from undergraduate programs to master's programs all the way through professional schools and doctoral programs. The importance of having comprehensive Christian universities is evident in a number of ways, not the least of which is the necessity for providing the finest possible education at all levels to young people who seek to develop a Christian worldview.

To say "Jesus Christ is Lord" is to say there is no question, no debate, no issue that the Christian academic is unwilling to engage. As our university's president, Robert B. Sloan, Jr., writes in his preface to this document, "Such a claim has deep implications not only for the church, but also for the institutions of higher learning to which the church has given birth." Thus to confess Christ

. . . is not merely to affirm a religious confession, nor to say something only about an interior faith or personal, individualistic values. Rather, to say "Jesus Christ is Lord" is to make a statement that touches not only the private spiritual lives of believers, but encompasses all of the ranges of the created order, including the scope and breadth, as well as the complexities, of human social, political, emotional, and physical experience.

As a result, Christian academics should be willing to engage the most significant questions of our day – whether issues of the environment, organizational management, constitutional law, theological and religious debates about the distinctiveness of the Christian faith vis-à-vis other religions, the cultural and political diversities of our world ethnically, religiously, and culturally – without ceding these matters to secular institutions.

Unfortunately, four-year Christian liberal arts colleges and universities have, in many cases, slowly devolved towards providing a secondary and synthetic style of education. Professors who could be making substantial contributions to leading-edge thinking and presentation are overburdened with heavy teaching loads, are not given adequate time for research and scholarly productivity, do not have the opportunity to train doctoral students, and thus are often not on the front lines of debates that shape the modern world.

The lack of comprehensive Christian universities also has a further negative consequence. Christian universities are not offering Christian graduate students the opportunity to get advanced academic degrees, at the highest

possible levels, under the academic tutelage of professors and programs which intentionally and institutionally support their faith and its engagement with the world of learning. Thus, the faculty hired by Christian universities, faculty with Ph.D.s who have virtually all been educated in state institutions and/or secular institutions, are themselves – though serious about their Christian confession – ill-equipped to pursue in the Christian university the discussion in the classroom and in scholarly publication of the engagement between faith and learning.

The Opportunity of the Christian University's Future

A Christianity which will bear witness to God's Word in Jesus will be a speaking, thinking, arguing, debating Christianity, which will not be afraid to engage in intellectual and philosophical contest with the prevailing dogmas of its day.

Oliver O'Donovan⁷ University of Edinburgh

The Christian university must be re-established on a firmer foundation. Leaders of our older Christian colleges often failed to see the threat to the religious mission of their institutions because cultural Christianity still set the moral conditions in which they lived. A prevalent cultural Christianity prevented careful consideration of the interaction between faith and scholarship. The faith was taken for granted rather than cultivated and engaged.

Christian colleges and universities have to do more than simply require students to attend chapel while offering the same education that could be obtained more cheaply with taxpayer subsidies at a state institution. That has been the usual formula and it has failed. Christian higher education must be distinctive, or it will cease to exist completely. We must choose to pursue our business with Christ fully in mind. We must not segregate the faith into extracurricular programs. Instead, we must offer *a distinctively Christian education*.

The true Christian university integrates faith with learning. Integrating faith and learning means that professors and students actively consider what the faith might mean to politics, economics, history, law, literature, and many other disciplines. The goal is to cultivate Christian minds as vigorously as we seek to develop Christian hearts and hands. When the Christian faith is at the very center of the enterprise of education and scholarship, then the university will

make a distinctive contribution and successfully resist the secularization process that has captured so many institutions founded on the hopes of believers.

Any misunderstanding of what it means to pursue authentically Christian scholarship should be corrected at the outset. Christian scholarship is not a straitjacket that aims to limit and constrain. It is, instead, the type of learning that expresses genuine curiosity about the world from a Christian perspective. Christian scholarship covers the academic world fully and asks more questions than secular learning does. Christian scholarship asks questions like, "What if the Gospel is true? What if law does have some divine origin?" More generally, as George Marsden has suggested, such scholarship gives the freedom to inquire: "Suppose someone believed in God, how would the assumptions or conclusions of our discipline look different?"⁸ To be free to ask such questions in a community of learning is to open a window in a previously airless building.

The world of academia is like any other. If no attempt is made to compete, the result is automatic forfeiture. For too long, Christians have forfeited the field of academics. We have allowed the academy to be ideologically captured in many instances. In the most elite institutions, it is far more acceptable to argue from Marxist, feminist, or green perspectives than it is to suggest that Christianity has real intellectual content and deserves to be taken seriously. We often see our young people influenced for the worse by "tenured radicals," to use Roger Kimball's phrase.⁹ It is time to stop failing to show up. Though we sometimes act as though we do not believe it, the kingdom of Christ extends even to the ivory tower.

HBU's Vision

At HBU, we believe that with the passing of the old institutions and the lack of ambition of the new, something important has been lost, something that the world desperately needs. We are in a defining period in the history of western civilization. We are witnesses to a global confrontation of ideologies that is not just on the battlefield or in the halls of government, but runs through our entire social fabric.

This is also a time when the frontiers of science are being pushed out into new territory. Half a century ago, the founders of HBU discussed the need for an institution that would do something even more important than instructing how to build an atomic bomb. Their university would provide the intellectual and

spiritual wherewithal to determine if and when such a force might ever be used. Today, that insight remains relevant, not only for its application to warfare, but also for its need with regard to cloning, stem cell research, and a variety of other bioethical concerns.

The challenges of the future in a world like ours must be met by faithful young men and women of today who are equipped with a full education, who understand the nature of the world the Creator entrusted to us, in which we are called to be salt and light.

We seek nothing less than to guide and instruct the next generations of faithful artists, authors, actors, academics, business professionals, lawyers, musicians, doctors, teachers, scientists, and others – individuals who will understand the times we live in, and understand God’s calling for their lives. We seek to produce the future leaders of the world who also live as servants in the kingdom of God.

Houston Baptist University offers an ideal location for taking the next step in Christian higher education. We have the foundation in place. We are a substantial university with the best accreditation available. Our trustees, president, faculty, and staff are all Christians. We have the leadership and the vision necessary to grow into a truly influential, national Christian university.

Our founders had the vision to build HBU's campus directly in the path of Houston's growth. We are located in the fourth largest city in America. What happens at HBU will be covered by major media outlets. We have ready access to major airports and numerous hotel facilities for hosting conferences and symposia. There is a large pool of potential students immediately available. HBU will have an advantage in recruiting outstanding scholars who want to live in a major city rather than a small town. Our campus can become a major cultural center in the metropolis. We are poised to become the kind of institution that can be a leader for Christian higher education in America.

The opportunity is before us. The people who choose to fuel HBU’s mission will be instrumental in revolutionizing Christian higher education and in building the first in a new wave of great Christian universities in America.

HBU will fulfill its responsibility for the renewal of Christian higher education through a vision organized around Ten Pillars, described in more detail in the following pages:

- ❖ Build on the Classics
- ❖ Recruit for National Influence
- ❖ Embrace the Challenge of Christian Graduate Education
- ❖ Establish a Residential Society of Learning
- ❖ Increase our Cultural Impact through our Faculty
- ❖ Renew our Campus, Renew our Community
- ❖ Bring Athens and Jerusalem Together
- ❖ Expand our Commitment to the Creative Arts: Visual, Musical, and Literary
- ❖ Cultivate a Strong Global Focus
- ❖ Move to the Next Level as an Institution

These Ten Pillars are the reflection of envisioning sessions and conversations held with HBU faculty, staff, students, trustees, alumni, and selected members of the community. The ideas and initiatives listed in this vision document all have their roots in those sessions. While the Ten Pillars do not exhaustively list all the suggestions, or all of our plans, they do capture the spirit and direction of our university family's aspirations for HBU.

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TEN PILLARS FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR UNIVERSITY

First Pillar: Build on the Classics

The first duty of a university is to teach Wisdom, not a trade; Character, not technicalities. We must learn to support ourselves, but we must also learn how to live.

Sir Winston Churchill¹⁰

During the past half century, colleges and universities have shifted their core curricula away from required courses and great texts. They have allowed students to choose from a grab bag of classes that fail to guarantee the solid understanding of history, literature, languages, the arts, science, and mathematics that was once a hallmark of a college education.

The result is that the first two years of college often appear to lack justification. Students may view the courses they take outside of their major as a mere hurdle, a relic of an educational system that has become obsolete. Given the way core curricula are currently structured in many schools, they are right. What was once a coherent program of courses designed to generate a set of academic and cultural competencies has degenerated into an educational salad bar. Rather than participate in the slow slide away from a true college experience and toward a more expensive version of vocational-technical preparation, we will choose a different path.

Our relatively small size and low student-to-faculty ratios allow us to move quickly and take advantage of the current gap in the marketplace. There are many students and families who grasp the importance of becoming truly educated. They know that majors are important, but that careful reading and writing in the liberal arts develop the capacities that make for successful leaders, managers, and executives. Liberal arts excellence leads to excellence in the professions. There is also evidence to suggest that students strong in the liberal arts are highly successful when they seek admission to graduate and professional schools.

Perhaps the most important benefit of a classical liberal arts program is that it helps students gain wisdom and perspective. The meaning of life, despite the drift of the modern academy away from deeper questions, is worth studying at the university. In liberal arts courses, students and professors take part in a

great conversation that has been going on for centuries. It is in these courses that a community of faith and learning encounters good versus evil, questions about human nature, morality, law, ethics, community, government, and the nature of truth. At some point in the last century, many universities (particularly secular ones) stopped caring about these things. HBU still cares.

In order to provide our students with the full benefit of the traditional understanding of the liberal arts, we will move in the direction of a true core curriculum over the course of the coming decade. We will establish departments in the classics, in modern languages, and in philosophy to support our liberal arts curriculum. Our students, regardless of their choice of major, will have strong foundations in history, literature, the arts, foreign languages, government, science, and mathematics. There will be more core courses that all students must take. Many of these will be signature courses unique to the HBU experience. Upon completion of our curricular restructuring, many students will value the core curriculum as much as they do the classes required for their majors.

Second Pillar: Recruit for National Influence

I dream of the impact [our students] could make on people and on the history of ideas. I dream of those who go into other professions, who will bring Christian perspectives to bear throughout the disciplines, and in law and business and medicine and throughout our society.

Arthur Holmes¹¹

HBU's outstanding alumni are the product of this university's nearly five decades of service. We want to build on that legacy creatively and aggressively. During the next decade, HBU intends to take its place among the finest Christian universities in the United States by attracting a student body that is both large¹² and selective. In short, we want to build on our tradition of sending out well-educated students from our campus by attracting top freshmen from all over the country. We will transition from recruiting primarily in Houston and in Texas to aiming for students from every state. The best way to describe this new strategy is to say that we plan to become a top educational *destination* for students from families around the nation interested in a distinctively Christian university learning experience. At the same time, however, we will continue our policy of being open to students of all faiths. We are a Christian university with a

Christian faculty and staff, but our policy is to be open to all with the desire and the merit to study with us.

While it is important to recruit nationally and to showcase our university to people across the United States and in other countries, we must empower our recruiting effort with scholarships. To say we want the finest Christian college students in America does not mean we simply want those who can afford to pay their tuition. HBU plans to develop a far larger endowed scholarship fund in order to make our university available to young people of achievement and aspiration, regardless as much as possible of their ability to pay.

In addition to building our scholarship fund, we are substantially bolstering our educational offerings. HBU will open a new Honors College, which will feature a curriculum based on reading from the great texts of human achievement. The new Honors College and the growing rigor of our Christian liberal arts core will allow us to produce even more students who have a high likelihood of getting their first choice admission to graduate schools, law schools, and medical schools and then thriving in those competitive environments.

Finally, when we combine national recruiting with more scholarship dollars and our new educational offerings, HBU will begin to produce a series of Rhodes, Fulbright, and Truman scholars. Houston will become a capital of Christian academic influence with a legacy that extends around the globe.

Third Pillar: Embrace the Challenge of Christian Graduate Education

While Protestants support educational institutions at every other level, they have almost nothing to offer at the highest levels of scholarship and graduate training. At those levels, where a local community of likeminded scholars might be most important, there is the least to be found.

George Marsden¹³

Though many Protestant and evangelical colleges offer doctorates in areas such as ministry, counseling, and education, it is an extreme rarity to find doctoral degrees offered in history, political science, economics, literature, or a number of other fields. This failure is a costly one for both Christian colleges and

Christian students who wish to pursue doctoral studies with mentors who share their faith and their interests.

Ph.D. programs are strategic, not only because Christian universities so rarely offer them, but also because they enable us to train Christian academics. Some Christian schools have now begun to emphasize the integration of faith and learning, in part to compensate for the fact that most of their own faculty have been trained at secular schools in a corresponding mindset. When institutions like HBU begin to offer Ph.D. programs, we will initiate a cycle of Christian mentorship in the scholarly disciplines that will produce new ways of thinking about scholarship and will encourage reverence for the old.

The point is not to propose a parallel universe of scholarly distinction, but rather to participate fully in what is supposed to be a pluralistic academic world. How can Christians expect the academy to understand them, their commitments, and their ways of thinking if there are not more Christian scholars who know how to relate their faith to their work? Reinhold Niebuhr warned of the dangers of religious illiteracy,¹⁴ and the sad truth is that many top scholars in the secular world do indeed display a frightening misapprehension of Christian thought. We need to be engaged in the scholarly discussion. The way to do that is to have more Christians leavening the ranks of the university. The way to accomplish our mission is to train more Christian scholars.

Of course, graduate education also has a strong relationship to the professions. A law school, for example, may present a significant opportunity for our university. The study of the law presents myriad possibilities for distinctively Christian learning and analysis. More important, generating a supply of lawyers trained with Christian ideals could have a considerably positive effect on the legal community. Issues of constitutional freedoms; international law; law, public policy, and medicine; and religious liberty could indeed be important specialties for such a school at a place like HBU.

We will perform a feasibility study on the question of starting a law school. The Houston market very likely has room for another law school. A law program of the type we would start, one that engages seriously a Christian worldview, would be unique in the region and rare in the United States.

Other professional schools might well be a good fit for HBU. Thus, we will likewise do feasibility studies regarding advanced professional training in ministry, the various fine arts, and communication.

Fourth Pillar: Establish a Residential Society of Learning.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

Matthew 22:37 (NASB)

If you look at the architecture of the most venerable European foundations, you see that they were designed for communal practices, a shared life—refectories for common meals, residences, libraries, and lecture halls sharing the quad. A college was a communion and a community, a society of learners.

Darryl Tippens,¹⁵ Pepperdine University

When students live together in addition to taking courses together, the learning extends beyond the classroom into the rest of the campus. Professors teach the students, but students also teach each other by sharing their own understanding of what they learned during a lecture or a debate between classmates. The students have the capacity to spur each other on to deeper thought about the material they study in common. In this way, the work of teaching and learning integrates itself into the lives of the students. They stay in the place where learning occurs and are constantly inspired to think about what they are studying. The same dynamics apply to their spiritual formation. Living together in a community that consciously seeks to follow Christ as a model helps students take their faith seriously. The campus becomes infused with a combination of scholarship, friendship, and Christian fellowship. Students live and study on the same ground. That unique combination is what inspires alumni of many universities to develop powerful bonds to their institutions. Their colleges and their related communities of learning and residence become woven into the tapestries of their lives. They are excited to return and to send their children to the same place to have the same experience.

HBU is going forward into the next dozen years with a strong plan to become a primarily residential campus. We are currently in the process of building a residential college that will accommodate more than 350 students. This facility will have men's and women's wings and will supplement our current residence colleges and the apartment style living in Husky Village. The complex will contain a small chapel, a sweet shop, innovative housing arrangements, fitness facilities, and a variety of gathering places. There is also an apartment for a faculty member-in-residence who will act as a mentor and friend to students. This building is the first of several more like it to come. While it is commendable also to have a campus where students come to take classes, study, and leave to live elsewhere in the city, we think it is even better to offer a complete experience of living and learning to the majority of students.

In addition to building enough residential housing to accommodate a large majority of students at HBU – at least 70% of our undergraduates – we plan to develop the campus in such a way as to encourage the gathering of friends and the interaction of students and professors. We will achieve that goal by creating attractive green spaces and small parks throughout the campus. HBU will also take steps to create an expanded bookstore with a coffee shop that is either nearby or contained within the facility itself. The new bookstore and coffee shop will offer extended hours to fit the lifestyles of students. Our goal will be to create an atmosphere that encourages browsing through books, spending time with friends, and studying.

Today's students view technology as a given. They expect to be able to connect wirelessly from almost any location on campus so they can send email, download lectures, do research, update their favorite electronic pages (like Facebook), and maintain websites. For them, connection via the net is so important as to constitute a major distraction when not available. We have already worked rapidly to generate wireless connections in all the buildings of the campus. However, the future demands that we continually maintain and upgrade those capabilities.

Another critical part of our mission is to help every student succeed, even when they might lack proper study habits because of either disability or personal history. At a Christian university, doing everything possible to keep students moving forward together is a core value. For that reason, we will redouble our efforts to establish a strong and effective academic success center on our campus.

Athletic activities are also important to the student life experience. HBU has moved up to Division I of the NCAA in order to compete at the highest level. Given our location in one of the largest cities in the United States, with the potential for major media coverage, it makes sense for HBU to excel in athletics both to give our students the chance to rally around the efforts of their peers and to advertise the institution. The simple reality is that most Americans know of the existence of colleges outside their own states because of sporting competition. Something that benefits students, alumni, and the rest of the HBU family by entertaining, providing scholarships, and advancing the institution deserves to be expanded.

Finally, HBU will continue to build fitness centers into our residence colleges and will also develop a student life center with a large fitness facility. Having adequate spaces for exercise is another key component to encouraging students to live on campus. During envisioning sessions with students currently enrolled, athletic equipment ranked high on their list of concerns. They want fitness machines, free weights, and rock climbing walls. Students also envision the campus being surrounded by a walking/jogging trail.

The most important element of developing a residential community of living and learning has to do with our Christian character. Above the priorities of parks, walkways, bookstores, coffeeshops, athletics, and fitness rooms, HBU must retain its dedication to providing students with a gracious, hospitable, and winsome Christian environment. That means we must continue to serve them reliably and well, in terms of teaching, administration, student programming, food service, and maintenance.

Fifth Pillar: Increase Our Cultural Impact through Our Faculty.

[T]hose individuals who do believe that the Bible is a source of truth about the fundamental issues of life must assume a scholarly idealism in their life and work, and present their views when and where it is appropriate, in the spirit and humility – dare we say the intelligence? – of Christ.

Dallas Willard,¹⁶ University of Southern California

HBU's faculty features a number of veteran professors who have worked tirelessly to mentor students for decades. Younger faculty members also carry

on the tradition of developing students' knowledge and abilities to the fullest by maintaining high standards. We have always been a school with a heavy teaching load for faculty. While teaching will continue to be the central mission of our university, so that the graduates of the university will always be the primary reward of a job well done, HBU is ready to develop another key facet of the learning experience.

We will continue to hire faculty who are committed to teaching, but have other academic gifts as well. They are also capable of influencing the world with their scholarship. Great professors teach, but they also never stop learning. What they learn, they can publish. Much of the research scholars do rolls out into medical work, business, law, economics, government, diplomacy, and a variety of other pursuits. At HBU, we have a tradition of outstanding faculty, and we want to enable them to spend more time making a positive impact on world culture as an extension of their teaching and research.

What this goal means in terms of vision is that we plan to find ways for our faculty to spend more time writing and doing research. We think it is good stewardship to have Christian academics focusing their efforts outward into the culture at the same time they are teaching and mentoring students on the campus. The best model for a university is to have professors who not only are doing significant research and publishing, but are also devoted to teaching. Thus, *undergraduates* have the benefit of professors who are engaged in the most significant questions of the day. The old debate about teaching *versus* research is misplaced, for neither teaching nor research is the ultimate goal; rather, it is the *learning experience* of the student that is primary. Thus, teaching, research, publication, performance, and artistic endeavors are all means to the end of providing both undergraduates and graduate students the finest possible learning experience. Further, those faculty who have a publishing record are facilitating a learning experience not only for wider audiences, but also inter-generationally as their artistic works, compositions, and published monographs and essays live even beyond their own lifetimes.

In order to facilitate this transition toward more freedom for our faculty to publish, present papers at conferences, perform research, and offer expert opinions, we intend to make a series of academic and operational moves over the next 10-12 years. HBU will increase the budget available for professional development of faculty members. We will find ways to fund sabbaticals, reduced teaching loads, and trips to national conferences. Part of that funding

will occur through securing government funds for research. We will work to generate investments by donors for endowed chairs that carry reduced teaching expectations and heightened research goals. HBU will also develop academic centers (a Center for the Study of Christianity and the State, for example) which will be able to pay a portion of a professor's salary through current funds or endowment in order to support research and writing activities. As our professors engage in more research and publication, HBU will promote our faculty members' expertise in various fields to the media. This marketing of our professors' efforts will lead to a substantial growth in news stories featuring the work of HBU faculty and their students, thus enhancing our ability to recruit the best and brightest students nationally. It will also burnish our institutional reputation.

Making improvements to the teaching enterprise will continue to be central to the university's mission. Many faculty members feel that moving from a double major system to a major/minor system would enable them to design more rigorous and competitive majors for students. We will study that possibility to determine whether it is needed in order to have majors comparable to the best offered anywhere in the nation. We will also promote interdisciplinary conversation between faculty and students in order to encourage a community of scholarship rather than a series of isolated cells tailored to narrow specialization.

Teaching and research which reinforce strong scholarship on campus and in the community will enable our Christian academics to be truly as "salt" and "light" in the culture alongside the students they serve. This is the future for faculty at HBU.

Sixth Pillar: Renew Our Campus. Renew Our Community.

You are the salt of the earth.... You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.... Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5:13-14, 16 (NASB)

One of the themes that resonated most powerfully in our envisioning sessions was the call to renew our campus and simultaneously participate in the lifting up of the local community. When Houston Baptist University was built, the neighborhood was developing, full of professionals looking for a reasonable commute to downtown and families raising their children. In fact, HBU was largely financed by the development and sale of the real estate surrounding the campus. Our university and the surrounding community are closely linked. We intend to move HBU into the future and to aid our neighbors at the same time.

The local Community Development Corporation lists HBU as one of the area's primary assets. We plan to substantially increase the value of HBU as an asset to the community. That increase in value will occur architecturally, geographically, educationally, and financially. Several members of the HBU family called for the university to increase its architectural and geographic profile by expanding our physical presence to the edge of Highway 59. We will work to gain control of the land in question.

A number of participants in envisioning sessions also wanted to see HBU create a distinctive landmark that can be seen for miles around, such as a clock tower or a steeple. In addition to a single landmark, we plan to expand our entire campus to the freeway and as a campus to become a Houston landmark on one of the city's major thoroughfares.

In addition to becoming a Houston landmark by extending the perimeter of our campus, HBU will begin the project of replacing most of the buildings on campus with new structures while preserving our historic mall, which pivots on the ten pillars and the Hinton Center. The Morris Cultural Arts Center opened in the fall of 2007. Our new residence college and university academic building will both open in the fall of 2008. These historic sites and new structures will represent the face and architectural style of the new campus to develop through the influence of this vision. We will build upon those projects by developing new athletic facilities; a new home for the sciences, mathematics, and health care professions; a dedicated student life center with a full array of fitness equipment; a new library; a teaching facility for the fine arts; and a series of other improvements.

The net result of our building program and our plan to substantially increase the student body and faculty will be to make our community into more of a true college neighborhood. HBU will attract a great deal of new capital,

businesses, and jobs to the community. We would like to help facilitate a transition toward the kind of vital, mixed-income, diverse neighborhood that has been successfully developed elsewhere in Houston and in other major cities around the nation. A growing university can help make that happen.

HBU plans to go beyond simply benefiting our community through growth and positive economic effects. We will also become more involved with the area through a variety of programs. HBU will begin working more closely with the City of Houston and our local Community Development Corporation to energize the neighborhood. We will initiate an intentional giving campaign that will link the contributions of HBU employees and students to ministries and charities doing effective work in the area. We will also find ways to use our educational program to benefit residents by involving students from education and, if it should develop, a new school for social work. The combined involvement of the division of student life and the Department of Christianity and Philosophy could also facilitate an urban ministry program. We will also explore opportunities for a College of Continuing Studies to benefit the community and the university in providing programming for professional development, executive education, and leisure learning.

Perhaps most ambitiously, we will explore the possibility of starting a charter school/lab school on or near campus that will be overseen by our college of education. A school of that type would provide students with an excellent education while also giving our students a chance to learn by working with children. We are also considering the establishment of a childhood development center that would provide care and learning for very young children of faculty, staff, and students, as well as members of the community.

Seventh Pillar: Bring Athens and Jerusalem Together

True dialogue is as far as possible from neutrality or indifference. Its basis is the shared conviction that there is truth to be known and that we must both bear witness to the truth given to us and also listen to the witness of others.

Leslie Newbigin,¹⁷ missionary and philosopher

Just as HBU benefits from being in a great city, so also the university is a gift to the community in which it resides. While a college performs the indispensable functions of educating students and producing research, there are other important missions as well. A university is a cultural center and a place for invitation and engagement. Athens and Jerusalem can meet on a campus in the city of Houston.

Thanks to the Morris Cultural Arts Center, the Belin Chapel, McNair Hall, and a number of other facilities on campus, HBU offers a number of outstanding venues for events that can bring the city to our campus. Nearly as important as the venues is the overall atmosphere of the campus. A university is a place for learning. It is a place for debate and discussion. It is a place where one can see talented people offering their best work, whether that is art, dance, musical performance, or lectures. It is also a place for museums. HBU is now finishing out new spaces for three museums, including the Dunham Bible Museum, the Museum of Southern History, and the Museum of American Architecture and Decorative Arts.

We are now holding events more frequently than ever, thanks to the establishment of a university host and our new facilities. We intend to bring the city to campus with greater frequency and with imaginative programming. Consider the following possibilities:

- Concerts (Christian, classical, world music, etc.)
- Lecture series
- Worship events
- Continuing education, leisure learning, and executive education
- Film festivals
- Political events
- Book tours

- Seminars on topics like money management, raising children, and studying the Bible
- Writers' conferences
- Live theater

The possibilities are endless. We plan to have academic panels tied to guided museum tours. We will explore the idea of film festivals based on museum themes, holiday celebrations, historic events, academic symposia, lectures and presentations. We will enlarge our bookstore and expand the offerings so that people travel to campus to browse and shop. With this vision we are committed to bringing the city to HBU.

What we are aiming for is to make HBU a major part of life in Houston. Visitors will want to come here. Filmmakers will preview their work on our campus. Artists will have shows in our gallery and great hall. Playwrights will bring their productions to our stage. Authors will be here for signings. Politicians will consider a stop at HBU a standard part of their Houston itinerary. During the next decade, we will be a crossroads for the city and the university experience.

Eighth Pillar: Expand our Commitment to the Creative Arts: Visual, Musical, and Literary

You with the foresight of this place have established a position where the believer artist can learn and grow....

**Jeanette Clift George, founder of The A.D. Players,
upon the opening of the Morris Cultural Arts Center**

Clearly, our culture is now more open to the art that engages the age-old tradition of exploring God's ways with man. Secular ideologies have lost much of their appeal and once again people are hungering for the unifying vision of the religious imagination.

Image Journal of the Arts¹⁸

HBU has been conceived, built, and run as a Christian university with the ambition of sharing the Christian faith, its moral and intellectual traditions, and its glorious cultural heritage of the arts. It is beyond dispute that the Christian

faith has inspired some of the greatest music, art, poetry, writing, and dramatic performances of all time. In fact, it would be impossible to comprehend the culture of the West and of the United States without knowing something of the contribution of Christianity. Just as we embrace the opportunity to pass on the moral, spiritual, and intellectual content of Christianity in the classroom and in student life, we also aspire to invite students, and indeed the whole community, to share our academic and emotional admiration for the arts and to be part of that creative tradition.

Our interest in the arts goes beyond appreciation for what has been done, but also for what is being created and for what will be created. Thanks to the Morris Cultural Arts Center, we have a theater capable of hosting outstanding musical and dramatic performances. We will develop productions of our own and will bring in others from the outside to exercise good stewardship of our facility and to give the community greater exposure to the arts. We are also building a new academic structure that will host our outstanding program in studio art and will include both instructional and gallery space.

In addition to those initiatives, we foresee an expansion of our musical practice facilities, the creation of a drama program, and the extension of artist-in-residence programs on our campus. HBU will also create new academic programs in drama, film-making, and creative writing and will study the feasibility of new or expanded academic programs in communication arts, including television, journalism, and professional writing. We will also move toward the creation of both bachelor's and master's degrees in fine arts. Our current and potential strength in the arts compels us to begin studying the question of creating a new school of music and fine arts. Finally, HBU will begin an annual or bi-annual writer's festival and workshop.

It has been said that the writer of songs influences a culture more than the politician exercising power. What is surely true is that our God is a creative God who brought a beautiful world into existence and filled it with people capable of appreciating beauty. Similarly, just as we believe human beings are made in God's image, we believe He provided the ability to create artistically as a reflection of his creative glory. The Christian university, committed to the worship of the Creator God, and thus to both aesthetic appreciation and creation, must be involved in the arts.

Ninth Pillar: Cultivate a Strong Global Focus

*Rise to greet the sun
Red in the eastern sky
Like a glorious bridegroom
His joyous race to run
Flying birds in heavens high,
Fragrant flowers abloom
Tell the gracious Father's nigh,
Now his work assume.*

Chinese Christian Hymn by T.C. Chao¹⁹

As I travel, I have observed a pattern, a strange historical phenomenon of God "moving" geographically from the Middle East, to Europe to North America to the developing world. My theory is this: God goes where he's wanted.

Philip Yancey,²⁰ Christianity Today

The Christian faith is a universal faith in the sense that it appeals to every people group of the world. Christians are charged with being good citizens of the communities within which they live, but they are also part of a trans-national church open to all. Given the global nature of the church, the fact that the good news of Christ is for all people, and the further fact of the burgeoning relevance of international business and politics, we propose to provide an education for students that is increasingly international in its scope.

A Christian university should have the same international focus the church has always had. Beginning with the Great Commission, Christians have the obligation and the impetus to go, to travel, to share both aid and a message. We mean to expand our ability to give our students a type of international education that is fitting both for the global emphasis of the Christian confession and for the radical closeness of a world that is pervasively and increasingly interconnected.

As part of our global focus, we plan to begin an international office that will serve as an initiation point for sending many of our students and faculty to other nations for educational opportunities, cultural exchange, and mission trips. This office will have the mandate to increase our offerings for students interested

in studying abroad and will provide assistance to faculty who have already taken the initiative to coordinate trips in the past.

In order to make our international exchange and outreach as effective as possible, we will also make changes in our curricular offerings. First, we will emphasize language competence in our liberal arts offerings. Second, we will begin the work of creating majors in international relations and international business. We may also explore the formation of a center that promotes Christian entrepreneurial initiatives, such as micro-credit, designed to alleviate poverty in developing nations. Third, in the course of studying the curriculum and offerings of our current Christianity department, we will add a missions major.

The result will be that our graduates will be more likely to participate in mission trips, more knowledgeable about the world, more capable of understanding international news, more marketable, and better prepared to adapt to the challenges of an increasingly connected world. To do anything less would be to ignore both the spiritual and economic realities of a world made smaller first by the innovation of the jet aircraft and then more powerfully by wide access to the internet. Provincialism has become a metaphorical straitjacket ill-suited for the young, just as it has always represented a failure of nerve for those told to take the gospel into all the world.

Tenth Pillar: Move to the Next Level as an Institution

He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much.

Luke 16:10 (NASB)

Christ's aim was not to produce a little sect, which would have been comparatively easy, but to change the entire human enterprise.

Elton Trueblood²¹

Christian universities of the modern era (particularly Protestant ones) have, for the most part, chosen to maintain small communities of academic excellence. They have achieved a great deal in this way. Wheaton and Calvin, for example, though small and heavily focused on undergraduate education, have trained large numbers of prominent citizens out of proportion to their size.

We propose to blaze a new trail by growing substantially so that we impact the culture from a broader base of students and faculty. Our decision to grow is based on both market circumstances and our desire to turn a single talent (to employ the biblical metaphor) into ten.

Consider the following: metropolitan Houston is home to over four million people and growing. One could conservatively estimate that roughly one quarter of that number are evangelicals. A much larger number would be Christians of some other kind, such as Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and others. That would mean our university has a potential constituency of stakeholders who number a million or more just in the city. Expand that number to include all of Texas and the rest of the southeast and it is truly substantial

One reason Christian colleges and universities like HBU are not pushed far beyond their capacity with applicants and remain small is simple. They compete with state-subsidized universities that offer much lower tuition and often more diverse degree options. Even though large numbers of parents and students would likely prefer a college education at an institution that takes the faith seriously, they are intimidated by the cost, while also looking for expansive career opportunities for their children.

It is part of our vision to build a large Christian university, despite the historical tendency of Protestants toward small regional schools, and to achieve our growth by successfully making the case for investing in Christian education to donors. Our case is straightforward, and we will make it repeatedly during the next decade. People of Christian faith can make the difference for students by giving strategically to scholarship funds and by subsidizing the activities of the university.

The handful of years a student spends in the university tends to be life-changing and worldview-forming. It is during those years that young adults begin to decide who they are, whom they will marry, how they are going to vote, what their profession will be, how they will manage their money, and whether they will continue to go to church. The vast majority of Americans who end up running the government, cultural institutions, the media, and corporations have been through college. The university experience is a channel of influence through which an increasing number of young people pass. To cede those years of growth and maturation to an educational system that is resolutely secular and

places very little value on Christian thinking and virtues is irresponsible and a recipe for marginalization. The Catholic Church has realized the importance of higher education and presides over a strong network of colleges and universities, though the decline of the religious character of their institutions has been noted and documented.²² Christians of all stripes – evangelicals, other Protestants, and Catholics – must re-engage their historic commitments to the foundational importance of a university education that is marked by the distinctive convictions and values of historic Christianity. The church must again consider the university as part of its mission because the university is so closely tied to the future of the society.

HBU recognizes the need for a much larger investment in the Christian university. There must be more students, more faculty, more graduate programs, more graduate assistantships, more public lectures, and more academic centers. The university we have described in this vision is a national university, not the regional, master's granting institution we have proudly been. Our size and our mission will expand over the next twelve years while we transition into the kind of comprehensive national Christian university that the great city of Houston can surely support.

For these reasons, we propose to grow. Our 2007-2008 freshman class was the largest in the university's history. The 2008-2009 class is on pace to break that record. We anticipate that during the next several years we will continue to set new marks. Our goal simply stated is to triple the size of our student body and to hire the number of new faculty members sufficient to maintain or improve our current faculty-student ratios. Each student will have carefully considered the meaning of his or her faith spiritually, physically, and intellectually. At the same time, our campus will grow in size, in buildings, and in programs. HBU's vision is to become a shining light in the city of Houston and to send our emissaries into the whole world of corporations, financial markets, ministries, schools, television, universities, governments, medicine, Hollywood, entertainment, law firms, and the media.

The foundation of all the efforts detailed here will be to produce graduates who have been challenged to think carefully and critically, to write and speak clearly and effectively, to demonstrate integrity in their daily lives, and to see their faith as being important both to their behavior and to their way of thinking.

Our commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ demands nothing less – and surely even more than we have imagined – than the pursuit of this Vision: *The Ten Pillars: Faith and Reason in a Great City*.



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- ¹ This phrase is widely attributed to Kepler. For an example, see Del Ratzsch's entry "Teleological Arguments for God's Existence" in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- ² Lionel Trilling made it famous, but "the moral obligation to be intelligent" originated with his Columbia mentor John Erskine who wrote a book titled *The Moral Obligation to be Intelligent and other Essays* in 1915.
- ³ From *The Revolutionary Writings of John Adams*, Selected and with a Foreword by C. Bradley Thompson (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2000)..
- ⁴ *God and Man at Yale*, Regnery Publishing, 1951.
- ⁵ George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University*, Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 282.
- ⁶ Though Catholic universities have suffered similar declines. See James Tunstead Burtchaell, *The Dying of the Light*, Eerdmans, 1998.
- ⁷ *Begotten or Made?* Oxford University Press, 1984.
- ⁸ *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*, Oxford University Press, 1998.
- ⁹ *Tenured Radicals* was the title of Kimball's 1993 book on radical academics published by Harper & Row.
- ¹⁰ *Sir Winston Churchill: A Self-Portrait*, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1954. The quote is drawn from a speech Churchill gave to the House of Commons in 1950.
- ¹¹ From the edited book *God and the Philosophers*, Oxford University Press, 1996.
- ¹² The Campus Master Plan completed by Doug Kozma and associates at JJR in Ann Arbor, Michigan, has concluded that HBU has acreage sufficient to sustain 7,000 undergraduates, with 70% of them living on campus, and graduate and professional schools of at least 3,000 students.
- ¹³ *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*, Oxford University Press, 1998.
- ¹⁴ From his foreword to John H. Hallowell's classic *The Moral Foundation of Democracy*, University of Chicago Press, 1954.
- ¹⁵ Address to the Pepperdine Faculty on October 6, 2000.
- ¹⁶ From the edited book *The Bible and the University*, Zondervan, 2007.
- ¹⁷ *Foolishness to the Greeks*, Eerdmans, 1986.
- ¹⁸ From the journal's vision statement available at <http://imagejournal.org/page/about/>.
- ¹⁹ From *A Survey of Christian Hymnody*, Hope, 1987. Quoted in Mark Noll's *Turning Points*, Baker Books, 1997.
- ²⁰ From the February 2001 issue of *Christianity Today*.
- ²¹ *The Incendiary Fellowship*, Harper & Row, 1967.
- ²² James Tunstead Burtchaell, *The Dying of the Light*, Eerdmans, 1998.