Michael D. Beaty and Douglas V. Henry, eds. *The Schooled Heart: Moral Formation in American Higher Education.*
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Reviewed by Ronald E. Bartholomew

The Schooled Heart: Moral Formation in American Higher Education is a deeply provocative work. Editors Michael D. Beaty and Douglas V. Henry, both of Baylor University, put forth the objectives of the book in what I found to be an enlightening and engaging introduction. Tracing the history of the institutional position of moral formation once held in higher education, they argue that the traditional emphasis on building morality was displaced primarily by the epistemological shift that occurred during the 1930s. According to their view, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, liberal education at universities embraced revelation from God as the source of absolute moral truth. However, during the 1930s, the prominence of the scientific method caused a shift away from revelation as an accepted source of truth. They assert this has led to the demise of liberal education's once harmonious union of science and moral truth and has reduced a university education to career training. What is worse, this epistemological shift has aided in the escalation of moral relativism, which denies that revelation from God establishes absolute moral truth. Their book is, in part, a response to Derek Bok's *Universities and the Future of America* and is a cry for a return to the type of university-level liberal education that integrates moral education. They assert this change must flow from and be founded in the Christian tradition, but it still should uphold the scientific method as a viable way to obtain knowledge. They issue a formal call to all Christian universities to return to the original foundations of liberal education, which they contend were to educate the whole man and to "initiate students into a quest for goodness," not merely provide them with the skills necessary to succeed in their chosen occupations (20). I found this entire volume to be deeply provocative and significant in the context of what the academy professes to believe and do—particularly to those interested in scholarly pursuit in the unique context of faith-based universities such as Brigham Young University.

The first chapter in this volume, written by Warren A. Nord, argues there are two legitimate approaches to moral education: that which has traditionally been labeled "liberal arts" and its counterpart, "liberal-free." The first "is grounded in the classical canon" and "binds students to the past, to tradition" (31). In contrast, the liberal-free ideal "values free, critical inquiry and tolerance; it is skeptical" (32). His assertion is that while both have their risks, both also have their place. The risk of the tradition-bound liberal arts ideal is that true educational pursuit can degenerate into mere indoctrination founded in dogma, or what he and others in this book refer to as "training." He proposes that, despite this risk, younger children need moral socialization, so there is a place for this approach. However, this place is not in higher education. His primary contention is this: by the time young adults reach the level of a university education, they must not be bound down by any such restraints. However, they will not be able to navigate a liberal-free education without the assistance of carefully integrated curriculum and educated university professors.

One danger of the liberal-free approach is that it can easily be reduced to a chaotic, disjointed array of "disciplinary monologues," possibly leading students to the dangerous precipice of moral relativism (which I would argue, it has). However, with correct management, this ideal can take students to the next moral level, allowing for free thinking and personal decisions while still guiding them to consider "what matters most": "our existential concerns about good and evil, suffering and flourishing, justice and injustice, love and beauty, God and the ways we find meaning in life" (43). Nord proposes a university environment where academic and intellectual freedoms are mandatory, but where religious studies are equally mandatory—not as a purely academic pursuit but as a viable lifestyle choice. Inhibiting *anything*, including and especially religious beliefs, is just another form of indoctrination. Secular dogma violates these principles of freedom as much as religious dogma.

In the next chapter, Robert C. Roberts presents a counterargument to Nord's. He contends that since the time of Aristotle, moral value has been attached to behavior that is discernable with the five senses. Therefore, something is only defined as moral if it is a demonstrable achievement or accomplishment of some sort. He argues that an additional component of true morality involves escaping earthly measures and pursuing the divine. In order for something to be truly moral, he asserts, it has to escape behavioral measures, which are focused only on achievement, and pursue the truly divine in each of us and in the universe. He gives as an example the Socratic tension between the utilitarian lawyer and the pensive philosopher. He contends that since the time of Plato there has been

an artificial separation between what is thought of as moral education and intellectual pursuit in universities. In reality, true intellectual, scientific pursuit can and should be morally educating. To a Christian, Roberts contends, morality must be both practical and theoretical. He feels that public universities are not suited to pursue Nord's ideal of a liberal-free education because they are, or at least attempt to be, "morally neutral" (65). This furthers the artificial divide between intellectual and moral pursuit. Nord himself argues that in order for students to form their own concept of morality in the liberal-free ideal they must possess a certain set of virtues. Roberts asserts that these virtues are based on morals; this places Christian universities in a position of preeminence in helping students receive a truly value-based moral education because they are not morally neutral. He is equally critical of Nord's perception of liberal arts education as good only for training or indoctrination. Roberts bases this criticism on his own perception that the Christian tradition is rich with its own devices to critically claim all truth. He posits that in the current system, public (secular tradition) universities are not in a position to reverse the trend of our eroding moral condition. On the other hand, Christian universities—as long as they carefully select faculty based on moral character, choose students just as carefully, and then join the two in a close "apprenticeship"—are aimed at educating the human soul.

The third chapter in this volume, written by Nicholas K. Meriwether, argues against Nord's liberal-free ideal *and* Robert's assertion that publicly-funded state universities are not in a position to correct the problem. As he reminds us, this is partly because Christian universities educate less than one percent of the total student population in the United States. After meticulously chronicling the history of the epistemological shift from classical texts and the scriptures as the source of truth to the absolute abandonment of moral verities in favor of positivism, Meriwether includes a rather detailed historical summary of the key players in the drama of the demise of moral education in modern universities. He then asserts that competing pedagogies—the "pedagogy of profession" vs. the "pedagogy of mediation"—lie at the heart of the erosion of moral education. The pedagogy of profession, he asserts, "assumes an unchanging, normative account of human nature and moral absolutes" and "is a pedagogy of *reminding*, *reinforcing*, *elaboration,* and *exhortation* of universal and necessary moral truths" (84, italics in original). The pedagogy of mediation, on the other hand, rejects these tenets in favor of "a pedagogy that stresses *adaptation, discovery,* and *open-ended application* of particular and contingent moral truth" (84). His important point is this: the pedagogy of mediation, which has not only replaced the pedagogy of pro-

fession but has led to moral relativism based on positivism, is founded on quantitative modes of knowing and of proving that are ill suited to a moral theory committed to both moral realism and teleological eudaimonism. Furthermore, he asserts, moral truth cannot be arrived at via quantitative methods, but only through the qualitative modes of awareness, which are elicited via the pedagogy of profession: "Thus, as we will see, an attempt to harness moral realism and enduring moral norms to a pedagogy of mediation in the (faint) hope that a combination of a survey of options, case-study dilemmas, and open-ended dialectic in a context of instructional neutrality will produce the 'discovery' of enduring moral values is fraught with peril for the simple reason that the methods employed are designed to produce completely opposite results" (84–85). What follows is a critical examination of the pedagogies of mediation and profession, including the primary argument against the pedagogy of profession, which is that it is merely indoctrination. Meriwether asserts that Nord's liberal-free education paradigm discussed above is merely a watered-down pedagogy of mediation. He also argues that history has shown that the profession of a set of values has not limited creative and critical thinking; in many instances it has led to or enhanced it. In fact, he contends, if private and state universities are truly committed to "a generous sampling of alternatives duly represented . . . striv[ing] for balance and equal representation, the presence of religiously informed moral belief would have to be significantly increased" (99). He asserts that this is not the business of private or Christian universities alone but of the entire academy.

What follows next is a remarkable chapter by Stanley Hauerwas that is equally enjoyable and insightful. At times he had me laughing until I was crying. Hauerwas's point is both simple and profound: modern universities in the United States are turning out students who are as faithful to the morals and values of the state as students of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Christian universities were to those of the church. By participating in carefully engineered "ethics" courses designed to teach them what they had already presupposed—that they should decide for themselves what is right and wrong in a given situation—students develop an increased allegiance to what they had already perceived as the "American dream": to do what they want to do and to get what they want to get. The state has effectively replaced the church as the wellspring of moral values. As long as universities continue to serve the state instead of the Christian cause, he asserts, "We live in dark times. By 'we' I mean we Christians" (103).

In the second part of the book, "Christian Resources for Moral Formation in the Academy," David Lyle Jeffrey takes a biblical approach to moral formation in education. In his near-poetic chapter, "Wisdom, Community,

Freedom, Truth: Moral Education and the 'Schooled Heart,'" he identifies and then expounds on what he terms the four desiderata (desired ends) of education: wisdom, community, freedom, and truth. He does this primarily by examining what the Bible teaches about each. He postulates that wisdom is incarnate in Jesus and in the example he set before us and can best be obtained from reading and discussing the scriptures. Next he tackles the concept of community. He notes: "Moral education in a Christian context is . . . inescapably, a corporate function. Whereas great knowledge may be acquired by solitary study, and individualized tutorial mentoring may further sharpen both wit and skill development, moral education requires for its proper Christian practicum a wider communal context" (123). He then explains the etymology of the word *college*, tracing it back to the description of the association Jesus had with his twelve apostles—a "colage," to quote Wycliffe, or a group devoted to Christ-centered learning. He muses, "Perhaps we can . . . try to imagine why it is that universities and colleges once founded upon [these] principles . . . departed from them so far as to be thoroughly opposed not only to Christ and the church, but in some cases opposed even to cultural remembrance of their own historic witness to Christ" (125). Instead of being Christ-centered, modern institutions of higher education have increasingly become places of private benefit rather than public good. To counter this, he contends, "we must resist the commodification of education by refusing to treat our students as clients, but welcoming them rather as neighbors" (124)

One of the main thrusts of his chapter is that included in the definition of neighbors, whom in the Christian imperative we must love, are those of the past as well as those of the present in other cultures; in addition, "no learning that neglects either of these can be meaningfully moral"(130). To address his third desiderata, Jeffrey notes that the word *freedom* "has become for our culture a debased term, and in its debased assertion, a contradiction, in many cases, of community. Contemporary notions of Christian freedom can too easily reflect the modern secular connotation of autonomy and license instead of the biblical idea which is their contrary rather than their source" (125). Again, drawing on the etymology of the word, he notes that anciently *freedom* implied generosity, as in liberality. In fact, he posits, this was at the very root of the notion of *liberal studies* itself: "*other-directed freedom* is an indispensable condition of moral education" (126, italics in original). Jeffrey also notes that moral relativism has also destroyed the meaning of the word *truth*, his fourth desired aim. He uses the doctrine of Bertrand Russell as an example of the persuasive "glorification of the 'self-made' man or woman" that has led to the "pursuit of self-interest at the expense of all other interests," which has allowed

truth to be defined by this pursuit (127). This glorious essay is a clarion call for all educators in Christian institutions of higher education to return to the original quest dedicated to examining the wisdom, community, freedom, and truth in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ; as a stand-alone piece, it is easily worth the purchase price of this book.

One of the more profound chapters in this volume is "Tracking the Toxins of *Acedia:* Reenvisioning Moral Education" by Paul J. Wadell and Darin H. Davis. Responding to Charles Taylor's *The Ethics of Authenticity,* Wadell and Davis offer another explanation for the twisted, dark side of individualism pervasive in our postmodern society: the notion that in order to be an authentic individual, you must deny yourself of anyone or anything that transcends you. While Wadell and Davis accept Taylor's premise that this unfortunate phenomenon has caused much inertia in our current culture, their explanation diverges from Taylor's; instead of a simple conceptual confusion about authenticity, Wadell and Davis argue it is the outgrowth of *acedia*. They define *acedia* as lowering one's sights away from the pursuit of goodness because of disgust for or despair in achieving it. It is the numbing and dumbing down of one's expectations in life because of the discouraging, even depressing, belief that achieving greatness isn't possible or perhaps even desirable. This sloth or laziness is characterized this way: "I'll just get by day-to-day, stay out of people's way, do my thing, and float along." *Acedia* hinders people from achieving greatness, changing, or attempting to do great things, and it is fostered by the couch-potato, video-game, entertainment culture of sitting idly by the wayside, observing others doing great things but never really becoming engaged in them as more than a spectator. *Acedia* is further promoted and more easily accepted by the cultural message that economic success and social prominence matter more than moral and spiritual excellence. Not that seeking job security, professional certification, and economic survival are necessarily wrong—it is that this myopic pursuit becomes a distraction from seeking for more.

Wadell and Davis succinctly summarize the three causes of *acedia,* as explained by Hook and Reno, as egalitarian piety (the notion that "being oneself" is heroic in and of itself, without being associated with greatness), cynical suspicion (the "distrust of and disenchantment with anything that is noble, heroic, or magnanimous"), and supine indolence (the refusal to take any risks for the greater good) (139). They assert that the antidote for *acedia* is a moral education that focuses on the vocation of "hearing and responding to the call of goodness," an education that calls us out of ourselves and into relationships with others, especially with God (141). In fact, they argue that, contrary to the contemporary notion that happiness is

rooted in self-gratification, we can only find that which was missing in our lives by moving outside of ourselves, that none of us is the answer to the incompleteness in our own lives. They raise a clarion call to teachers to appeal to the notion that "fulfillment and happiness are found not in lives of calculated self-interest but in lives spent seeking excellence through virtue, service, goodness, and love," an idea that has been silenced in our culture as dangerously unrealistic (143). However, they warn that in order for students to seek goodness, they will need to be imbued with some sort of spiritual revelation—much like the experience the ancient Apostles had when asked by the Savior to forsake all and follow him. This will be prerequisite to pursuing a path utterly at odds with what they have been taught will make them happy and will "demand unlearning so many of the messages [they] have imbibed"; in fact, it will require "being reeducated about happiness" (144). Wadell and Davis argue that "such a radical reorientation in our thinking about happiness must become the central element in the moral formation of students" (145).

The difficulty of this quest for happiness through goodness, they argue, will require the mastery of the triad virtues of hope, courage, and perseverance. Hope will empower students when they become discouraged at their lack of goodness and their power to acquire it as well as the strong allurement of *acedia*. Courage, in contrast with perseverance, or sheer endurance, is daring to attack and overcome anything that comes in opposition to the quest for good. Together, these three virtues facilitate the quest. In order for this quest to become a reality in students' lives, Christian colleges and universities "must foster in students an ambition for goodness instead of . . . for wealth, . . . virtue must be . . . more compelling than celebrity, service more attractive than self-aggrandizement" (149). Instead of supporting whatever values students finally endorse, institutions must help students realize that "no life is morally praiseworthy simply because [they] have chosen it; rather, it's morally praiseworthy because by . . . embracing it [they] actually become good" (150). Institutions must embrace and perpetuate the notion that each student's calling in life—his vocation—is the pursuit of goodness, and then they must provide a place where the meaningful initiation into that vocation can occur. This would require an extraordinary element of faculty unity and purpose, as well as an almost complete but refreshing overhaul of the curriculum. Inasmuch as the quest for goodness is the faculty's and the institution's vocation as well, no price would be too high to pay.

The final two chapters in the volume treat humility as the quintessential virtue required for moral formation in higher education. I found the first to be less compelling than the second, but both left me reflecting on

the philosophical dimensions and foundations of their arguments. In the first of the two, Shawn D. Floyd contends that although humility is typically viewed as a Christian virtue (and in reality can best be understood in that context), it ought to be accepted in the liberal academy as the requisite virtue for the appropriate exchange of secular ideas because it facilitates the ends of what he terms a "democratic education." He asserts that "our educational institutions ought to promote distinctively democratic virtues" that "prepare students to contribute to—and flourish in—a society in which its citizens collectively embrace the foundational principles of democracy" (156). The balance of his argument is a simple justification for the inclusion of the virtue of humility in the liberal academic interchange despite its religious or Christian overtones. He argues that just because a particular virtue is rooted in religious belief does not mean it would not benefit the honest pursuit of intellectual truth. On the contrary, accepting the virtue of humility would *not* require the liberal academy to accept religious beliefs or convictions, but rather, it would require us to submit to honest inquiry and respectful deliberation.

In the second of the two chapters on humility, Stephen K. Moroney, Matthew P. Phelps, and Scott T. Waalkes diverge from Floyd's approach dramatically. By basing their argument exclusively in the scriptural canon, they argue a tripartite theological rationale for cultivating humility in the academy. They assert that humility is requisite because (1) others are made in God's own image and may have something valuable to teach us, (2) we are finite creatures whose knowledge is limited, and (3) our fallen, sinful natures cause us to have distorted perceptions of reality. Simply put, because "the central practices of higher education are *learning* practices aimed at seeking the good called *truth*," the virtue of humility must be cultivated in teachers and learners in order to pursue that end most effectively (171, italics in original). Their chapter concludes with the authors sharing pedagogies specific to their disciplines (international studies, psychology, and theology) based on their theological tripartite as examples of how to cultivate humility in students. They argue that each of their disciplines offers plentiful resources for cultivating humility in that context.

While this collection is important to the Brigham Young University community on a philosophical level, the book left me empty-handed as far as *practical* recommendations for solutions to the larger problems it raises regarding moral formation in higher education. The incredibly lucid and pertinent nature of the arguments establishing the philosophical context of the problems and their solutions was, for me at least, in stark contrast to the narrow and shallow nature of the chapters that purportedly offered solutions in practice to these problems. Perhaps this is epitomized in the

concluding arguments of Waddell and Davis's chapter on *acedia*. They assert that if those in the liberal academy do not believe that what they propose is a possible, realistic, or pragmatic solution, it is endemic to the problem itself. I found myself in this camp. While I wholeheartedly agree with the foundational arguments of the demise of and need for moral formation in higher education as well as the philosophical arguments explaining the roots of the dilemma in which we find ourselves, I did not find the practical solutions offered comprehensively viable. The contributing authors of this volume collectively and individually call for an overhaul of the curriculum, faculty selection, and operation of Christian liberal arts universities and colleges on a philosophical level only and should follow up with an additional volume or volumes, inviting chapters from those with expertise in translating these arguments into educational realities.

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