

Symposium and Banquet Honors Christian Scholar

A fascinating mix of scholars, students, and community members---47 in all---spent Saturday, September 26 exploring questions that Prof. **V. Elving Anderson** has labored over for nearly 60 years. The Genetics and



Religion Symposium at the University of Minnesota's Moos Tower was the first of two events that celebrated Dr. Anderson's deep and abiding concern to integrate earnest faith in Christ with clear-minded scholarship in the area of human genetics.

The genesis of the program, begun while he was still leading the MacLaurin Institute, was **Bob Osburn's** deep conviction that Christian scholars in secular universities who follow Christ in their scholarship are underappreciated by the church and, sometimes, their colleagues. "Christian scholars like Elving Anderson are Christ-like examples in academia, but few know how they shine for Christ there," said Osburn.

For the past year, a committee of University of Minnesota and Augsburg College Christian faculty worked to design a sterling program involving scientists, theologians, and historians who are professors at the University of Pennsylvania,



Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Marquette University, and the University of Minnesota.

The evening banquet was a festive occasion with 92 friends, family members, scholars, and other well-wishers who gathered at the University Radisson Hotel. Emcee for the evening was former Dean of Continuing Education at the University of Minnesota, Prof. **Hal Miller**. Tributes were offered by a range of friends, including Prof. Emeritus **Robert Frykenberg** of the University of Wisconsin and President Emeritus **George Brushaber** of Bethel University, and read on



behalf of University of Minnesota Dean of Biological Sciences **Robert Elde** and **Dr. Francis Collins**, Director of the National Institutes of Health, and author of *The Language of God*. Family members concluded with a verbal tribute by son **Carl Anderson** and a charming slide presentation assembled by daughters **Martha Anderson** and **Cathy Sleiter**. "It was a truly glorious evening for a scholar who has glorified God," concluded Osburn.

What is a redemptive change agent?

In these early days at the Wilberforce Academy, we're trying to understand how God works to transform students' motivation so that they become effective Christ-animated redemptive change agents who bring renewal in their home societies.

But, first, we have to ask, "What does a redemptive change agent look like?" To help with an answer, summer Intern **Peter Swanson** is concluding his work with us by researching a bibliography of Christian change agents at the same time that he is beginning a year of study at Cambridge University. So, we'll know much more after we delve into the sources he uncovers. What we clearly know is that a redemptive change agent looks *quite unlike* the portrait painted for us by American political leaders who mouth the word "change." Sloganeering all too often masks a quest for power that lacks the bracing vigor in Jesus' call to discipleship: "Follow me."

We suspect redemptive change agents are men and women who are: 1) courageous and perseverant (think Gideon, Apostle Paul, or Joshua); 2) open to God in such a way that His call is their command; 3) clear-minded thinkers whose view of human sin is as high as is their respect for God and His Word (which means they make it their responsibility to carefully apply a biblical worldview in political, economic and social life); and 4) resistant to the sinful, unjust status quo. On this last point (resistance to the status quo), Udo Middelmann (son-in-law of the late Francis Schaeffer) writes in his 2008 book *Christianity vs. Fatalistic Religions* that "whereas religions drug people into submission and, at times, stupidity, Christianity energizes mind and body to creative action." Rather than counseling tranquil submission to evil, Jesus commanded that God's people take action that puts "hell's gates" on the defensive (Matt 16:18).

Strategic planning serves a long-term vision

Academy staff, under the direction of our board (chaired by **Roger Arnold**, a VP for Thrivent Financial Services), are engaged in a two-year process to develop a curriculum that develops effective redemptive change agents.

Dr. Linda Leonard, our curriculum coordinator, is leading us through a process of researching and writing the curriculum, as well as incorporating already-existing products that are available. We expect to pilot portions of the curriculum with local students in 2010, and then beta test our curriculum in 2011. Along the way, we are meeting gifted students who are attracted to our vision (such as **Thangboi** of northeast India, who continues to be hard at work developing Cornerstone Academy of Manipur).

Careful planning will lead to long-term results that glorifies God and develop redemptive change agents that bring Christ's renewal to nations.

I've Been Thinking...

The broad foundation that underlies our curriculum is the idea that *ideas matter*. Thus, what you believe about reality has a great effect on what you do about it.



Enter Udo Middelmann with *Christianity vs. Fatalistic Religions*

(2008), Darrow Miller with *LifeWork* (2009), and Vishal Mangalwadi with *Truth and Transformation* (2009). In his own way, each of these recommended authors argues that a biblical worldview offers a window to reality itself. Thus, in principle, Christ's follower can properly diagnose the human problem and its solution, whether in the context of international aid (Middelmann), daily work (Miller), or national development (Mangalwadi).

Proper diagnosis, however, is an essential, but insufficient condition for the redemptive healing of nations. That's why, in addition, we will train our students to *act* on a biblical worldview, lest their lives and their nations crumble (Mt 7:24-27). Ideas matter, but we must act to make a difference.

---Bob Osburn