Merlin W. Call Reflects on Fuller Seminary

A talk delivered to the Board of Trustees September 16, 2006 Pasadena, California
When Rich Mouw asked me to share some memories about Fuller, one of my fellow board members warned me to heed the maxim: "The farther back I look, the better I look." Since I will be looking back about 60 years, I will try to do that.

I am not well equipped to be very reflective or introspective. I start with a poor memory and am generally more focused on the present and future than the past. I am not competent to interpret history in any significant way. So I will leave
that to George Marsden and Jim Bradley, and here be more anecdotal, focusing largely on some of the seminary giants with whom I have had the privilege to share some time. I will give most of my attention to the earlier days of the seminary, since that is where my longevity and status as an ancient may more likely fill in gaps. I will have little to say about the last twenty years. Twenty years from now a retiring board chair can try to put those years into perspective.

I became a trustee in 1963. David Allan Hubbard took over as president of the seminary in September of that year, and I was elected a trustee on October 5. I had been approached by trustees Garrett Groen and Larry Kulp earlier, and by Don Weber, the vice president for Development, and I talked to Dave Hubbard, whom I had known for several years—but my election did not take place until shortly after Dave assumed the duties of his office.

It may be helpful to sketch the context of this time period. The so-called “Black Saturday” meeting had occurred the previous December. Under pressure from some faculty members, Dr. Harold Ockenga, as interim president, had previously authorized a study of Fuller’s Statement of Faith with the possibility of making some changes in it. A discussion among faculty and trustees about this, on “Black Saturday,” led to Ed Johnson’s resignation as a trustee. Dr. Edward John Carnell had resigned as president because of fatigue four years earlier, but, of course, he was still on the faculty. After Carnell’s resignation, Ockenga served as president from his base in Boston. In January 1963, Ockenga was asked to take
up Pasadena residency as president of the seminary, with the understanding that if he chose not to, Dave Hubbard would be asked to be the president. This led to Charlie Pitts’ resignation as a trustee. I was not a party to any of those discussions, but some correspondence from Ockenga indicates it was a compromise he himself offered: that if he did not move to Pasadena, Hubbard would become president. Ockenga initially indicated he would come to Pasadena, then had second thoughts and withdrew his decision to do so. Hubbard, at age 35, was elected president, and during most of 1963 was involved in significant decisions and plans being made at the seminary.

The board to which I was elected was composed of Charles E. Fuller, Harold John Ockenga, Dr. Rudolph Logefeil, and Herbert J. Taylor, all founding trustees of the seminary (among the founding trustees, only Arnold Grunigen was no longer on the board, having died before that time); Billy Graham, Dean Stephan, Garrett Groen (a Chicago patent attorney), Dr. Larry Kulp (chair of the geophysics department at Columbia University and on the cutting edge of carbon dating techniques), Paul Van Oss, Dr. Stan Olsen (dean of the Baylor Medical School), Bob Stover, C. Davis Weyerhaeuser, and Dave Hubbard. In addition, three trustees had been added earlier in 1963: Dr. John Huffman (Anne Huffman’s father-in-law, who was the director of the Winona Lake School of Theology), Ray Christiansen, and Clare Headington.

What I only partially understood at the time was that it was expected by those promoting my candidacy that I would
bolster the "progressive," pro-Hubbard faction on the board, as opposed to favoring the policies that later in my mind became associated with Dr. Harold Lindsell and others in that camp. In fact, with the resignations of Ed Johnson and Charlie Pitts, there was not a significant Lindsell faction left on the board, but with the benefit of hindsight I can see more clearly the expectations of Garrett Groen, Larry Kulp, and Don Weber in urging me to become a trustee.

Seminary enrollment in 1963 was about 300 students, and the faculty were 16 to 18 in number. The number of degrees conferred in 1963, from a single school, was 64.

My contact with Fuller Seminary, however, predated my selection as a trustee. The first classes of the seminary were held in the kindergarten classroom of Lake Avenue Congregational Church. My mother was the superintendent of that department. I was 15 at that time and cannot say I was focused significantly on this new seminary that was getting started with Gary Demarest, star pitcher the previous year for the University of California baseball team, occupying one of the kindergarten chairs, but it does give me a remote connection to the seminary from its first day. I even had occasion to "study" at the Cravens Estate, the property on South Orange Grove where Dr. Fuller at one time hoped to have the seminary, before he ran into the ever-present zoning authorities of the City of Pasadena. My study there was as a member of a Navigators Bible Club, led by Dan Fuller and Ralph Winter, which occasionally used the Craven Estate facilities.
I knew all of the initial faculty of the seminary. There were only four: Carl Henry, Harold Lindsell, Everett Harrison, and Wilbur Smith. Everett Harrison was a family friend who officiated at our wedding. Carl Henry’s wife, Helga, became a helper in my mother’s kindergarten department primarily, I believe, because their son, Paul, would benefit in his deportment by the presence of his mother. (Rich Mouw can share stories about Paul’s deportment in later years as a faculty member at Calvin College.) Harold Lindsell and Wilbur Smith were Sunday school teachers at Lake Avenue Church, with whom I had later contacts in a variety of ways.

Ed Carnell, who came in the second year of the seminary, was for several years the teacher of our Sunday School class, where he tried out on us the material that later became his books *Christian Commitment* and *The Case for Orthodox Theology*. His teaching stint in the class came after a period of time in which the class was taught by Charles Woodbridge, and was followed by David Hubbard and then Geoffrey Bromiley as teachers, with substitutes Gleason Archer, Harold Lindsell, Bill LaSor, and others from the seminary faculty. If only we had had some qualified teachers!

In 1955 I took seminary classes as a non-degree course student from Carl Henry (Doctrine of God) and Wilbur Smith (English Bible), who were two of the original faculty members, and from Ed Carnell (Roman Catholic Church and Soren Kierkegaard), Paul Jewett (Early Church History), and Lars Granberg (Psychology).
So I had a rich background of benefit from the seminary and its principal personalities from the early days.

But what about these personalities and my imperfect memories of them? We should start, of course, with Charles E. Fuller. One of the images that first comes to mind of Charles was from, I believe, 1964. The seminary had entered into an agreement with Winona Lake School of Theology in Indiana to merge its operation into Fuller’s, a union that lasted a very short while. The board decided to hold one of its meetings at Winona Lake, and in order to get there, chartered some small planes to fly us from Chicago to a small airport near Winona Lake. Charles Fuller had no difficulty flying commercial planes, but as I sat next to him in this small plane, flying low and being buffeted by winds, I saw that Charles was in real distress. I was not sure he was going to stay in the plane until it landed. When we returned to Chicago after our meetings at Winona Lake, he found land transportation back for that leg of the journey.

In the sixties, the seminary held week-long conferences at Mt. Hermon in the Santa Cruz area, and my family attended for a few years. I remember how our four-year-old daughter, Lori, would crawl onto Dr. Fuller’s lap at lunch while the Fuller grandchildren, Mary Hubbard, and the children of John Hubbard, Dave’s brother, sang “Heavenly Sunshine” for the group. Lori would giggle, to the delight of Charles. A few years later, when Charles was terminally ill, my wife Kathy and Lori visited him in the hospital. As they left, Charles gallantly took Lori’s hand and kissed it. It was several days
before she wanted to wash that hand!

Charles Fuller had a unique combination of traits and abilities. He was not an academic scholar by temperament, but he was bright and resourceful. He was a public relations genius. One of my favorite stories about him was the dollar bill he carried with him. A poor woman in Texas had wanted to support his radio broadcast ministry, but she had no money. One Sunday afternoon, as Charles told the story, after listening to the broadcast, she got down on her knees and prayed that God would provide means for her to send an expression of gratitude to Dr. Fuller. She looked outside where the wind was blowing hard, saw something fluttering in the breeze, and went out to check on it. It was a dollar bill, which she sent to Dr. Fuller with a note on butcher paper, telling its story. Charles exchanged it for a dollar bill of his own, and carried that bill in his wallet for the rest of his life. He would take it out and show it to audiences and tell the story, and he estimated that another $50,000 was given over the years from the inspiration it provided.

Charles moved by instinct, and could not always be counted on to be moving in the same direction the next time you saw him. Some said he made and lost several fortunes, starting with orange groves in pre-Depression years, and including oil and gas properties and other ventures. This is probably somewhat of an exaggeration, but he was able to make very quick decisions to invest what was then a lot of money based upon meager evidence.

The initial money for the seminary came, of course, from the Fuller Evangelistic...
Foundation (later renamed the Fuller Evangelistic Association), including some trust money inherited from Charles' father. But for the first several years, rather than turn the money over for management by seminary personnel and its trustees, Charles doled it out from the Foundation in a way that did not give seminary management the certainty of knowing exactly how much upon which it could rely. Uncertain expectations caused Ed Carnell during his presidency to complain in a letter to Harold Ockenga that Charles' changing communication about the monies was like a fever chart: up and down. The principal of about $2 million was eventually transferred to the seminary, when it was required in order to obtain accreditation from the American Association of Theological Schools.

About the time I came on the board, Harold Ockenga broached the idea of gathering evangelical scholars of slightly differing viewpoints for a few days to talk about the best way to express the nature of Scripture: "inerrancy" or something else. This was designed in major part to have others share with Fuller the burden of dealing with this lightning-rod issue, and share the flak that would come if there were to be a change in the inerrancy language. That conference was held in Wenham, Massachusetts, hence "the Wenham conference." Dr. Fuller initially pledged financial support for it, but when he began to receive criticism from his radio audience, he backed away from that pledge. I remember this because he enlisted my support to figure out how he could justify his change of heart to Harold Ockenga.
It is important that we understand that, to a substantial extent, Dr. Fuller sacrificed his radio program for the seminary. Many of his listeners and supporters were unable to fully appreciate, and refused to support, the seminary in its repudiation of “come-outism” (one of the themes of Ockenga’s inaugural address), its sensitivity to social issues, its refusal to condemn the RSV when it first appeared, the release of Carnell’s book *The Case for Orthodox Theology*, and other matters. With each development, there would come a wave of letters to the Gospel Broadcasting Association office saying “take me off the mailing list.” Charles would reaffirm his support for the seminary while dying inside, as “his people” disowned him and his broadcast ministry.

Charles was influenced very significantly by his wife, Grace, and son, Dan. But in one area Grace was her own theologian. It is difficult for us fully to understand today, but premillennialism was an important part of the seminary’s statement of faith to Charles, his constituency, and to Dr. Ockenga. Kathy recalls one evening when Charles and a few of us were in one room, probably at his home, and Grace and Kathy were in another room, and talk of the seminary’s position on premillennialism wafted back to them. The discussion evoked the comment from Grace: “My dear”—this was how Mrs. Fuller frequently began her sentences—“My dear, it would be nice to believe that we Christians will be spared persecution . . .” My conclusion is that Grace Fuller did not subscribe to the original seminary statement of faith.
Harold John Ockenga was a very different personality, though he and Charles Fuller had immense respect for each other. Charles was folksy and warm. Harold was courtly and articulate. He seemed to resist much preparation for speaking engagements, but would speak extemporaneously in complete, smooth, well-crafted sentences, without pausing. He was a speech teacher’s delight.

One of my more embarrassing moments on the board was in a meeting at Campus Crusade’s Lake Arrowhead headquarters, at the time of the publication of *Battle for the Bible*, when we gathered to discuss what the seminary’s response should be. This would have been in the mid-seventies, so I knew Ockenga pretty well by then. At one point in the discussion, he took me totally by surprise when he said: “Well, at least Harold (Lindsell) wrote his book with an irenic spirit.” Involuntarily, I blurted out in amazement, “Irenic?” That is the last word I would have chosen to describe his book. Ockenga politely ignored this outburst from his untutored young colleague.

Harold was also the culprit the only time I missed a plane because I did not get to the airport on time. David Hubbard has told about the careful way in which the chairmanship of the board was eased from Harold to Dave Weyerhaeuser, and I was asked to stop by Boston when I was in the East to talk to Harold about that in his office at Park Street Church. That part of the conversation went smoothly and was soon at an end, but Harold was particularly garrulous and wanted to talk about a range
of other subjects. I was keeping an eye on my watch, and at one point got up to leave. He asked what time my flight was and when I told him, he assured me I did not have to leave so soon, that I could catch a cab right outside the church and get to Logan Airport in plenty of time. We talked some more, again I got up to leave, and again he urged me to stay a while longer. By the time I finally pried myself out of his office it was rush hour, it took much too long to hail a cab, and I missed my flight.

George Marsden and others have written of the enormous contribution Harold made to the shaping of the profile of the seminary in its earliest days. He persuaded Charles Fuller to broaden his initial concept of a Bible institute to train missionaries and evangelists to include a center of scholarship that would engage the more liberal movements of the Church and reshape the direction of the major denominations in the 1940s. At the founding of the seminary, Harold was already the personification of engagement as distinguished from the separatism represented by the American Council of Churches and Carl McIntire. The separatist forces wanted nothing to do either with the apostate (as they saw it) denominations nor with the culture as a whole. Harold, along with people like Carl Henry and the other initial faculty members, of course, were unwilling to concede those areas to the opposition and, rather, insisted on engaging them with superior scholarship and getting on the “right side” of race, labor, and other social issues.

Even Wilbur Smith, the initial faculty member who did not have a PhD but was a
lover of books, was eager to see an evangelical scholarship arise that would produce books worthy of taking their place with those being produced by the more liberal members of the Church. My image of Wilbur Smith is still of a man hunched over, bustling along with books under his arm, responding with a brusque but not unfriendly “harumph” when greeted in the hallway. He was also remembered by many as leaning up on the lectern or pulpit (he was too short to lean over) to make a point about a scriptural passage he wanted his audience to remember: “Beloved, I never saw this before...”

Harold Ockenga's theme of engagement with more than a narrow segment of the Church and with the broader culture, which he brought to the formation of the seminary, was reflected and recaptured, I believe, in the Mission Beyond the Mission Statement crafted around 1980.

Harold Ockenga was the first president of the seminary, always operating from his base at Park Street Church in Boston, with many, many transcontinental trips to Pasadena. The second president, who served for a few years in the latter half of the 1950s, was Edward John Carnell. In his high school years he was described as a happy-go-lucky young man with a Model T, enjoyed by his fellow students, who graduated with no As and four Ds. Now, that is a Carnell that is impossible to reconcile with the Edward John Carnell that I knew and that I think others knew at Fuller Seminary. My first images of Dr. Carnell are of a man tall, thin, ramrod straight, painfully shy in individual or small-group situations,
yet apparently at ease and certainly eloquent in talking before a large group. I say “apparently” because I know that in some luncheon situations at which he spoke, he would let the rest of us eat while he was in the restroom losing the lunch he had not eaten. He always wore a dark suit and Homburg hat perched on top of his head with the brim exactly parallel to the ground, often with cane in hand. This was his uniform walking to the seminary from his South Oakland residence, absorbed in a page from the dictionary which he was memorizing. I understand it was also his uniform strolling on a Santa Barbara beach. I recall one Saturday afternoon when I went to his residence to discuss something with him and he was on the driveway trimming the adjacent hedge. I do not recall whether he was wearing coat and tie, but he probably was; what I do recall was first catching sight of him with the Homburg hat perched atop, clippers in hand.

Yet his Sunday school lessons were replete with homey, warm illustrations, such as of little Johnny, his son, who had been told he could not go into the street, sitting on the curb extending his feet an inch at a time to see how far they would reach without violating the commandment: Ed's illustration of mankind's proclivity to sin. And he had a dry sense of humor, as when he would come to class and announce he had just heard from his publisher: “They've sold another copy of my book.”

He was clearly the most popular professor of his era. Paradoxically, his aloof nature led to statements attributed to him such as: “Education would be a great
profession if it were not for the students,” and “Personally, people are a nuisance to me.” Our heroes do not come in ideal packages.

Carnell, more than any other person, set the tone for the Fuller Seminary inherited by David Hubbard, a legacy regularly acknowledged by Dave with appreciation. Carnell’s presidential inaugural address, supported particularly by his books *Christian Commitment* and *The Case for Orthodox Theology*, provided the gentler emphasis on love, not an orthodox creed, as the hallmark of a Christian, the need for humility in proclaiming our firmly held convictions, and tolerance in receiving the views of others (the equivalent of Richard Mouw’s “civility”). The ingredients were already in place: commitment to a high view of Scripture, to scholarship, to social and cultural sensitivity, to the evangelistic enterprise. To these ingredients it was Edward John Carnell who provided the yeast that leavened the loaf and determined the texture of the seminary that persists to this day. It became David Hubbard’s role to consolidate that gentler spirit and implement some of its implications.

The significance of the Carnelian emphasis is reflected in the fact that what was so controversial at the time he introduced it is taken for granted as part of our identity today.

It was during Carnell’s presidency that the seminary acquired accreditation from the American Association of Theological Schools and the significant faculty appointments of Geoffrey Bromiley and Paul Jewett were made. It was also the time of an important
resignation, that of Charles Woodbridge, who was very much out of place here with sympathies and instincts that placed him in Carl McIntire’s separatist camp rather than that of Harold Ockenga and Ed Carnell.

For Carnell, as has been documented by George Marsden and others, his term as president produced pressures that were personally unbearable for him. Although he had articulated a condition in assuming the presidency that the trustees would assume the burden of providing the necessary finances, he did not believe that was honored, and he spent many sleepless nights because of it. He did not bear easily the criticism to which his views were subjected, particularly that coming from his faculty colleagues, starting with the very evening of his inaugural address. And, perhaps, the evolution he experienced in his own rationalistic methodology required a change in his world view without the emotional makeup to accommodate it. The one emphasis I recall from his course on Kierkegaard was that propositional truth need not preclude existential truth, but I am uncertain he was ever able to appropriate that in a comfortable way.

I cannot leave Edward John Carnell without mention of one other person whose name rarely appears in the pantheon of Fuller Seminary. That is Don Weber. Yet Dave Hubbard said of Weber: “If Carnell is the most important man in setting the course of the seminary, then Don Weber has to be number two. In the four years between Carnell’s resignation and my own appointment, Weber virtually ran the school.” I find that statement particularly
significant because during that same period Harold Lindsell was dean, and I am sure that Harold Ockenga and Lindsell thought they were running the school. Don Weber was Ed Carnell's brother-in-law and was recruited by Carnell to become his assistant for development and public relations. Weber was the one who began to build the board from a small, nominal group into one with a significant role in the life of the seminary. He played a major role, I believe, in attracting Dave Weyerhaeuser to the board as he also did Max DePree and several others. It was he, in league with board members Larry Kulp and Garrett Groen, who talked to me about becoming part of the board, and who represented what in shorthand I would say became the "Hubbard emphasis" as distinguished from the "Lindsell emphasis" at Fuller.

There is one other giant of Fuller in the fifties and sixties about whom I am often asked, and that is Billy Graham. Billy had become a seminary trustee in 1956 at the invitation of Charles Fuller and encouragement of his good friend Harold Ockenga. My understanding is that he was a more active participant before I came on the board, but I take no responsibility for any change in his level of participation! He was present at the Black Saturday meetings in December 1962, and took an active part in the selection of Dave Hubbard as president, conditioning his favorable vote on (1) Harold Ockenga's again becoming board chair and also chairman of the Executive Committee, and (2) consideration of Carl Henry (who by then was the editor of *Christianity Today*) as a seminary board
member. I do not recall the consideration of Henry’s becoming a board member after I came on the board.

I do recall four seminary-related meetings at which Dr. Graham was present: (1) a board meeting one Sunday afternoon held in the Ship Room of the old Huntington Hotel; (2) a meeting here on campus, including luncheon at the refectory; (3) the 20th anniversary banquet at the Huntington Hotel in 1967, at which he was the principal speaker, very shortly before Charles Fuller began his terminal illness that culminated in his death the next year; and (4) a meeting at the Los Angeles Hilton Hotel. At this last meeting, there were two principal topics of conversation. Billy had suggested to Dr. Fuller that his brother-in-law and colleague, Leighton Ford, be considered as a successor to Dr. Fuller on The Old Fashioned Revival Hour broadcast. I was chairing the Gospel Broadcasting Association board at the time, and another board member, Bruce Bare (and perhaps Dan Fuller), Dave Hubbard, and I wanted to make sure this arrangement continued to have Billy’s blessing, so we met with Graham and T. W. Wilson mid-morning in an otherwise vacant restaurant of the Hilton Hotel. He quickly reaffirmed his endorsement of Leighton for this role, and Bruce (and Dan, if he was there) left. Dave and I then talked to Billy about a letter recently received from him indicating that the press of other obligations required him to resign from the seminary board. Dave wanted me to tell Billy how rumors of that resignation were already being interpreted by the seminary’s critics with whom I was
acquainted as his disapproval of the
direction of the seminary. He listened
quietly, and then matter-of-factly said,
"Then I won't resign." He did not want to
be interpreted as disapproving the seminary.
I must have been somewhat worked up in
my comments, because I heard later that
when Dave returned to his office and gave
his administrative assistant, Inez Smith, a
report on the meeting, he said: "If Merlin
had given an altar call, Billy would have
come forward."

This, then, brings us to David
Hubbard, about whom I will be brief in my
remarks. It is not possible, of course, for
me to be very objective about Dave. And
many more of you have your own special
stories to tell about him. He became a
brother to me, and closer. In addition to not
a few Dodger games and Mark Taper Forum
performances, we and our families shared
museum visits, the circus, and mutual
therapy sessions (some of the most
significant ones of which were between Dave
and Kathy). When Kathy's life hung by a
thread, requiring major surgery, Dave
swooped in and took our 8- and 10-year-
olds to live with him, Ruth, and Mary for
several days. One day he took them out to
play softball and later told of his horror
when he hit the ball so hard it caught our
8-year-old daughter in her stomach and
doubled her over. He wondered what
permanent damage he might have done, only
to have her recover and throw him out at
first. To our children he was a second father,
persuading Senator Mark Hatfield at one
point to accept our son, Chris, into a rich
relationship as an intern, and later as a
member of the Senator's staff, even though Chris had no connection at that time with Oregon.

Dave and I had scores of breakfast and luncheon meetings, and usually roomed together on foreign trips he arranged for trustees to see the Church in its international setting. We roomed together, that is, when his claustrophobia did not get in the way. I recall particularly one evening in Mexico City when we were in a very comfortable but cozy room, when he had to escape the coziness to the lobby of the hotel and spend the evening on a couch there in the lobby.

We do not have time for me to do more than tick off some of the many significant contributions David Hubbard made to Fuller during his 30 years as president:

His ministry to the board of trustees. I read recently that someone had attended a seminar at which Dave spoke early in his presidency, and shocked those in attendance by telling them he devoted one-half of his time to the board, its recruitment, and its nourishment. He promoted, refined, and enhanced the concept of "shared governance," with its balance between the roles of faculty, administration, and trustees.

His ministry to his staff. One of the few areas of disagreement we had was when he resisted any suggestion that he might be entitled to more qualified staff members at times. His assumption was that his staff were there for him to minister to, almost whatever their shortcomings.
Presiding over the addition of Schools of Psychology and of World Mission. While planning for them had begun before he became president, only his considerable administrative skills permitted them to come into being and to flourish.

Deciding to admit increasing numbers of students rather than becoming more selective as applications soared in the early seventies. Carnell had desired to put the emphasis on selectivity, but Dave's attitude was: "If they are called to training for ministry, then who are we to say no?" And he saw the increased numbers as a way of expanding the influence of the seminary in a desirable way. Enrollment was about 300 in one school when he became president in 1963, 475 in three schools in 1972, over 2,000 in 1977, and by 1982 more than 3,000, including 500 women.

Advancing Ockenga's break with the separatists and Carnell's break with the legalists, by engaging with the larger culture and with a wider group of evangelical Christians. This included an international emphasis and a time-consuming stint on the California Board of Education as an appointee of Ronald Reagan, as well as chairing the Urban Coalition in Pasadena.

Building on the admission of the seminary into AATS during Carnell's term, and becoming a leader, in many ways the leader, in that professional body.
Establishing the provost position, and staffing it with creative giants Glenn Barker and Richard Mouw.

Recruiting Bob Munger, even if Dave bent or even ignored some faculty protocols in the process; and, of course, recruiting other significant faculty members.

Hiring Amelia Lobsenz for a couple of years during the seventies. Amelia was a Jewish marketing specialist, working out of New York, who had been used by Bob Stover in his temporary employee business. This small, previously unnoticed seminary in California suddenly was featured in *Time* magazine articles and other national periodicals, and radio and television programs to a remarkable extent, hastening by several years what would otherwise have been the slowly increasing prominence of Fuller.

Encouraging George Marsden's writing of Reforming Fundamentalism.

Establishing The Fuller Foundation, under Sam Delcamp's able leadership, both to enhance benefits for the seminary and also to furnish assistance to the whole range of Christian ministries increasingly identified as part of our constituency.

Producing the Mission Beyond the Mission Statement, which in its own way is testimony to the seminary's resolve to see itself in the whole body of Christ and to engage constructively with the wider culture, emphases inherited from his predecessors, Harold
Fuller's legacy is replete with strong, independent men: Fuller, Ockenga, Graham, Carnell, Henry, Smith, Harrison, Lindsell, Jewett, Ladd, Bromiley, Hubbard, and many others—without getting started on the list of trustees who contributed in their own significant ways. And all of these came before our present-day giants, including, in particular, Rich Mouw. Each of them had a different context, usually with different constituencies and pressures to which he was accountable. What impresses me as remarkable is the amalgamation of those personalities, generally in a constructive rather than a destructive manner, to mold the profile of Fuller Theological Seminary today. The interaction was never all that neat, a little ragged at the edges, but constructive and with an exciting result.

We were surrounded by greatness. Yet each could contribute only one or two of the building blocks and needed others to complete the edifice. Charles Fuller conceived the seminary as a school to train evangelists and missionaries, but needed Ockenga to provide the vision of a center of scholarship. Ockenga understood the need for engaging the denominations and the wider culture intellectually, but needed Carnell to bathe that engagement with Christian love. Carnell challenged us to be honest and Christian in our dealing with the differences of those with more liberal theologies, but needed Hubbard to incarnate that and to extend civility and understanding as well to the fundamentalists from whom we had sprung, while implementing its
implications in specific programs and ultimately putting it in the context of a Mission Beyond the Mission Statement.

And ultimately it is God, of course, who raised up these able men of greatness, gifted them for their task, and hovered over the formative days of Fuller Seminary. We recognize that with all the greatness of these giants, and those that have followed, that unless the Lord build this house, those who labor, labor in vain.

The seminary has always been faced with pressures from the right and left, and in most cases refused to be pushed off center, to overreact, or to drift (or bounce) in the opposite direction. The ethos of Ockenga and Fuller at the beginning continue to shape Fuller Seminary: the scholarly priorities of Ockenga, and the emphasis on practical ministry to the Church by both Ockenga and Fuller, all within the commitment to a strong view of Scripture and continuing engagement with, and prophetic witness to, the culture of the hour. At every point in time this has required dealing with challenging issues, often at the cost of misunderstanding. But the commitment to leadership in scholarship in the evangelical Church will always expose us to misunderstanding and controversy.

I have before suggested a parallel to the Supreme Court. The Court is often criticized for its split decisions, 5-4 or 6-3, with the lament that this means the change of a single Justice can produce a change in the law. Split decisions, however, may be an indication that the Court is doing exactly what it should be doing, deciding the most difficult questions, the ones by reason of their very difficulty requiring pronouncement.
by the Supreme Court. We might doubt the efficacy of the system if the questions reaching the Court were always those so easily resolved that they resulted in unanimous decisions. In an analogous vein, I doubt that we are fulfilling our purpose at Fuller with the talent amassed here, and being a faithful servant of the Church, unless we are wrestling at times with problems so difficult that they give rise to controversial and divergent answers. We should be alarmed if all the questions being asked are easy and all of the solutions are simple ones unanimously arrived at.

We have not arrived. We are always arriving. But that is the nature of Christian discipleship and will ever be so.