

**VALUE AND A CRISIS OF VALUES:
What role is there for Church higher education
in a context of economic uncertainty?**

INTRODUCTION

What is the crisis of values in both higher education and in wider society which we face in the midst of an economic crisis, and what difference might our church foundations and Christian tradition make to our response?

1 THE VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

a) The traditional view of value of university

Plato's Academy, Newman, Runcie, *universus*;

Robbins v Dearing

Different foundings of UCL v KCL

Bentham v Newman

Duke Maskell & Ian Robinson *The New Idea of a University* (Haven Books, 2001)

Charles Clarke's stress on utility (2003); Richard Branson (Radio 4, 29/11/2004)

Gov't White Paper 2003 and C of E's response.

b) Value for money

Growth in numbers – latest HEFCE stats – over 2 million in HE

Cuts in resources

'Efficiency gains' and 'trimming the fat'?

c) Shift of values

Development of accountability and assessment, tables – RAE, TQA, QAA, QA&AA,

Growth of league tables

Unitization, modularization, semesterization, CATS,

Shift from set menu to cafeteria choice, pick n mix, transferable skills.

1992 Abolition of Crossland's 1965 'binary line' actually made universities into pollai tecnai, polytechnics – 'many skills'

Left church colleges with a crisis of identity – becoming church universities.

d) Values of economic culture

Student as customer – with their fees, purchasing a product

Student as raw material – who is customer? Government, business, society?

Student as a source of income – choice between a high fee international postgrad v home UK undergrad?

e) Value of language or language of values?

Language of all university documents these days, strategic plans

Church colleges/universities search for V-Cs/Principals – language

2 THE CRISIS OF VALUE(S) IN SOCIETY

a) *Wider shift of culture and values*

Schools, NHS, market culture, Thatcherism, Blair/Brown years

From modern to postmodern society;

Secularism to post-atheistic society;

Impact of multi-faith, multi-culturalism;

Rise of importance of faith and religion in post 9/11 and 7/7 world

Lack of shared public discourse of values – MPs expenses row

Value of human being – Darwin, Dawkins,

Privatization of faith and morality – The Who ‘The Seeker’

Equal opportunities language as public discourse

Universities as instrument of social change, widening participation

Value for money as only public value – *Tesco ergo sum*.

2009 Reith lectures by Prof Michael Sandel on “a new politics of the common good”

b) *Current economic crisis*

Effect of government attempts at control over last ten years

Consistent pleas from Universities UK (eg Rick Trainor’s speech 13/9/2007)

Bidding for government money – costs of applying and complying

Development of top-up fees of £1,000, rise to £3K; moving towards removing cap.

That was the effect of tight funding – but with the credit crunch comes bigger effect.

No longer a case of trimming fat – we have cut into the bones already, so all that is left is amputation. Cutting of posts, or whole departments?

3 CHURCH/CHRISTIAN RESPONSES

a) *Universities and Christian heritage*

Ox/bridge foundations; Durham – St Chad’s and St John’s; KCL

b) *Church colleges shift to Anglican universities*

Development from teacher-training colleges to church universities

Job Specs for Principalships/V-Cs – language of church v the market place

What is the Christian basis for the staff or students?

c) *CUAC and the international perspective*

d) *Some possible Christian responses*

Consideration of Christian doctrines

– creation, fall, incarnation, atonement, resurrection, eschatology

Humans as possessing intrinsic worth as children of God, humans are moral creatures

Role of community; ecclesiology, corporate nature of Christ’s body (1 Cor 12)

Common cause with other people of faith in post 9/11 world