Unconditional Academic Freedom?

By Boyd Reese
Contributing Writer

I think my major response to the Board of Trustees statement is a threat to our academic freedom. Before we react so passionately, I think we need to take a step back and re-evaluate why the Board of Trustees felt the need to develop such a statement in the first place.

There is not now, nor has there ever been, an unqualified “Faith from a Mennonite Perspective,” with all and in all intellectual pursuits occur within certain cultural, political, social, and religious boundaries. The age we live in tells us that being Christian is not, and will not be, bad, while being inclusive of all claiming to be truth is good. Thus, “Membership Guidelines” absolute is blasphemy. Evangelists are the heretics of our nation and in the church, and included in this section “Clarification on some issues related to homosexuality and members’ conversation.”

There were four points in this section that were not: “the teaching position of the church.”
• We hold the Confession of Faith as our understanding of God’s way.
• We hold the Mennonite Church at one point as the teaching position of the Board did not involve these membership guidelines with their statements.

However, the clarifications went on to say, “We hold the Saskatoon and Purdue statements calling for the church to be in dialogue with those who hold differing views to be the teaching position of the Body of Christ.”

My sense of irony comes from looking at foundational documents of the MC USA...

By Rene Hoelsater

Ironies and the Statement

The predominant argument I’m hearing is that the Board of Trustees’ statements is a threat to our academic freedom. Before we react so passionately, I think we need to take a step back and re-evaluate why the Board of Trustees felt the need to develop such a statement in the first place.

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