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Tenure

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Tenure

For me tenure represents the antithesis of what we stand for at Wheaton, that is, for Christ and His Kingdom.

What is the purpose or objective of tenure in an academic environment? To promote or protect academic freedom? To provide job security (an added compensation factor in a profession which has been notoriously underpaid) or is it just part of being accepted in the world of the academy?

Do we need tenure to promote academic freedom at Wheaton? The presupposition is that without tenure, the administration and/or the Board will act in an arbitrary manner in areas of controversy of thought. "You just can't trust them." Trust is fundamental to a Christian community. Trust is fundamental in our relationship with God and His Son Jesus Christ? Can't we trust each other as Christians to do what is right and fair in times of stress and controversy? What does our teaching of love and care for each other in the family of God as brothers and sisters in Christ really mean if we can not trust each other? Tenure breeds distrust.

Is protection of the job or financial security of employment something consistent with a life of faith? Where is our hope? Where is our faith? Tenure as a protection of financial security is a false hope.

Would we establish tenure as a new policy at Wheaton if it were not already in existence? My grandchildren are wearing wristbands with the initials WWJD standing for the question: *What Would Jesus Do?* Would Jesus vote for tenure? As we seek to pattern our lives and organizational behavior within Christian context, why do we need this "right", this "protection"? What are we saying to our students as we preach trust and faith and then do not take the risk of practicing it?

To the extent it is required to provide freedom of expression, it is an anti-Christian statement of distrust of authority; to the extent that it is required to provide a protection for the job, it provides a false hope. How does tenure represent thinking and acting Christianly?

In addition to the above, it is expensive for our students - not measured in dollars and cents, but in the potential for incompetency in the classroom.

There is also something very wrong with a process that requires the person to promote himself or herself as part of gaining recognition or position. Once again, we are going through the motions of encouraging self-aggrandizement, which is totally inconsistent with the Christian life or the role models we seek to live for our students. How does this process encourage servanthood or the mind of Christ as reflected in Phil:2?

This came from a memo to Walt Kaiser dated 2/8/98 -