

May 3, 1999

Board of Trustees
Hope College
Holland, Michigan

Dear Trustees:

We are a group of concerned faculty who strongly supports Hope's Chapel program. Our concern is that the Trustees may be under the false impression that Ben Patterson and the other staff of the Chapel program are without faculty support. The names below represent faculty colleagues who believe Ben and his staff are men and women of the highest moral and professional standards, who have worked hard to serve students, and in so doing have developed a robust Chapel program that advances Hope's mission and enhances the College's character as one of the nation's leading Christian liberal arts colleges.

We rejoice in a variety of developments directly related to the renewed Chapel program:

- More than 10% of the student body using their spring break to go on missions
- More than 50 Bible studies in dorms and cottages
- Scores of students who choose chaplains to counsel them at critical moments in their lives
- The Summer of Service program and other calls to service, which in turn are reflected in the surge in majors in such fields as education, social work, and religion
- A full Chapel—which we attend and observe students being challenged to be whole people, to abstain from sex outside marriage, to abstain from abusing drugs and alcohol, to practice love and tolerance, to seek to integrate faith and learning.

We rejoice that 10:30-52 AM every Monday, Wednesday and Friday Dimnent Chapel is the most integrated place on campus—not only black and white, Hispanic and Asian, but Greeks and geeks, Protestants and Catholics and honest seekers, National Merit Scholars and students on academic probation, athletes and the disabled. In short, thanks to Ben, Dolores, Paul and other staff, Hope's Chapel is what every Christian college in the nation would long for—the presence of diversity celebrating unity in Jesus Christ.

We rejoice in the rising quality of admitted students, a rising number of applications, and a steadily improving reputation of the Chapel program. Moreover, we suspect a causal connection between this last fact and the first two. Ben Patterson enjoys a national and international regard as a Christian minister, author and speaker, a fact from which the College has benefited substantially.

We rejoice that renewal in the lives of so many hundreds of students—and some faculty—reaffirms what Hope has always stood for: being unique among small colleges in the pursuit of excellence in both the spiritual and professional dimensions of our lives.

We have been discouraged by the resentment evident among many of our faculty colleagues, who seem unwilling to extend tolerance toward students and faculty who espouse evangelical

Protestant and traditional Catholic views. As members of an academic community, we all are under the obligation to exhibit tolerance toward those with whom we disagree. We all are under a similar obligation to model the virtue of civility in public and private settings. Finally, as members of the teaching profession we ought always to adhere to standards of critical rationality that preclude such tactics as using anecdotal evidence and second hand reports to support general conclusions.

We have asked only tenured colleagues to sign this letter, as we are not willing to put junior colleagues at risk.

Sincerely,

Marc Baer, Professor of History
Sander De Haan, Professor of German and Chair of Modern and Classical Languages
Herb Dershem, Professor and Chair of Computer Science
Lee Forester, Associate Professor of German
Peter L. Gonthier, Associate Professor of Physics
James Herrick, Professor and Chair of Communication
Jack Holmes, Professor of Political Science
Anne Larsen, Professor of French
John Lann, Professor of Economics
Herbert Martin, Associate Professor of Business Administration
David Netzly, Associate Professor of Biology
Mark Northuis, Associate Professor of Kinesiology
Kelly Osborne, Associate Professor of Classics
John Patnott, Associate Professor of Kinesiology
Janet (Jenny) Everts Powers, Associate Professor of Religion
Ray Smith, Professor of Kinesiology and Director of Athletics for Men
Steven Smith, Associate Professor of Kinesiology
Thomas Smith, Assistant Professor of Business Administration
Todd Steen, Associate Professor of Economics
Glenn Van Wieren, Professor of Kinesiology
Karla Wolters, Associate Professor of Kinesiology
Ronald Wolthuis, Associate Professor of Education
James Zoetewey, Professor of Political Science

cc: President John Jacobson
Provost Jacob Nyenhuis
President-Elect James Bultman