

He is ideally suited to serve as our speaker at this, the mid-point of a day of conversations at the intersection of religion and liberal education. He bring a perspective that has been shaped through his long association with the Teagle Foundation, his tenure as president of three liberal arts institutions and his active engagement with the AAC&U, NAICU and SACS. But more than that, he brings his academic background in religion and religious thought, a longstanding interest in the critical roles of ethics and values in student formation, and an expansive view of what constitutes liberal education and its critical importance for the health of our society.

“values” have other fundamental meanings, and we commonly use them to describe “worth” outside of the measuring sticks used in markets.

This was called to mind a few months ago when I saw an intriguing title on a magazine cover asking, “What Are You Worth?” I took it to mean something about the purpose of life and hoped for some existential reassurance, but the story was actually about different ways to value investments. This reminds us that the same words convey radically different meanings depending on the circumstances and choices that one has in mind. It is easy enough to measure what it costs to raise a child, but impossible to quantify the unconditional value of the child.

The same premise holds true when speaking of the value of a liberal education. Equating educational value with monetary value is taking hold in the public mind, so it is good to sort out the terms. Some years ago, Professor Thomas Green described educational value in this way: “We are born into the world, but we are educated into the possession of our powers for the exercise of intellect, emotion, imagination, judgment, memory, observation, and action in a coherent way” Taking hold of these powers that we have as human beings is the good, the value if you will, that represents the “. . . defining presence of educational worth.” In this telling, education occurs across the life span in many contexts, and, to be sure, in schools, colleges and universities. The formal elements

of human experience, often by exploring the larger questions of meaning and purpose. The humanities typically do so from the point of view of life as lived and as portrayed in the imaginative and the existential narratives that shape our social and personal identities

own study of religion and their practice of it, if any, especially if a person's specialty is from another time and place.

I would like to take a somewhat different turn and suggest that just as humanities fields develop powerful learning outcomes, the study of religion does the same in ways that can have a strong bearing on understanding and addressing questions of identity and values. The study of religious texts and the full range of religious expressions from doctrines to practices foster patterns of thinking and learning with their own distinctiveness. The broad critical abilities shape

understand deity by criteria of comprehensiveness, eternity, oneness and love that are

Th