

What Father Chaminade Had in Mind

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By Kent M. Keith

President, Chaminade University

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Good morning! It's a pleasure to be here. I want to thank you for your fellowship and hospitality.

Two and a half months ago I became the President of Chaminade University of Honolulu. I consider it an honor to hold that position. I am very excited about what we are doing now and will be doing in the future. Chaminade is a good university poised to become a great one.

The Story of Father Chaminade

Our character and focus as a university are greatly influenced by the man for whom we are named: Father William Joseph Chaminade, a French Catholic priest who lived from 1761 to 1850. Let me begin by telling you about this extraordinary man and the results of his faith and courage.

Father Chaminade lived during a tumultuous period in French history. He was 28 when the French Revolution began in 1789—two hundred years ago. The new National Assembly issued its decree of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, which required the clergy to put allegiance to the State above loyalty to God and the church. Chaminade and other priests refused to take the Civil Oath of the Clergy. When all priests refusing to take the oath were required to leave France, Father Chaminade stayed in Bordeaux, and continued his work in secret.

At a time when priests were forbidden to exercise their ministry under threat of death by the guillotine, and people were forbidden to hear Mass or receive communion, Father Chaminade disguised himself as a tinker or vendor of household articles, and continued to say Mass, perform baptisms, and witness marriages. Day after day, for five years, he put his life on the line for his God and his people.

There were some close calls. Revolutionary agents knew that Father Chaminade had not left the country. On one occasion, the police entered his

property so unexpectedly that his maid had only enough time to upset a large, empty wooden washtub over him in the kitchen. After the police completed their unsuccessful search, the maid had the audacity to serve them drinks on the overturned tub. When later referring to this episode, Father Chaminade commented that only the thickness of a board stood between him and the guillotine.

After the death of Robespierre in 1794, there was a period of calm, followed in 1797 by a Jacobin decree which sent Father Chaminade into exile in Spain. After Napoleon seized power, Father Chaminade was able to return to France and begin his work of founding religious sodalities and societies. In 1817, at the age of 56, he founded the Society of Mary.

The Society of Mary was not to be monastic, and its members were not to wear habits, but rather secular clothes. Today they are known as Marianists.

Father Chaminade lived at a time when the exercise of human reason was being exalted as the highest aspiration of humankind. He knew better. He was a man of faith, and he knew that faith and reason must be combined for human beings to reach their fullest potential. That was true then, and is true today.

Father Chaminade decided that the most important thing he could do was to educate leaders and teachers who would lead and teach others to understand that faith and reason go together. The teaching of leaders, and the commitment to combining faith and reason, are two hallmarks of Marianist education.

The faith, courage, and vision of Father Chaminade are evident in the results of his efforts. Today, there are 111,000 students in 106 Marianist schools and universities in 30 countries.

That is an extraordinary legacy, and Hawaii has been part of it for more than a century. The Marianists first came to Hawaii in 1883. They assumed the leadership of St. Anthony's School in Wailuku, St. Joseph's School in Hilo, and St. Louis School in Honolulu. Chaminade University was founded in 1955. Today, the university has 900 full-time undergraduates, 1,340 part-time undergraduates, and 360 graduate students, for a total of 2,600 students.

Chaminade offers 28 undergraduate majors and four graduate degrees—Master of Science in Counseling Psychology, Master of Science in Criminal Justice Administration, Master of Science in Japanese Business Studies, and Master of Business Administration. Our largest single program is business, with

approximately 300 undergraduates studying for their BBA degrees, and another 300 graduates studying for their MBA's. We also have some unique programs. We have the only accredited Montessori teacher training program in Hawaii, and the only Interior Design program at an accredited university in Hawaii.

Incidentally, we have two sister universities which were founded by the Marianists on the U.S. mainland. The University of Dayton, founded in 1850, has approximately 10,000 students, and is the largest private university in Ohio. St. Mary's University, founded in San Antonio, Texas, in 1852, has approximately 3,800 students. We have recently reached an agreement with our two sister universities by which our students have the option of spending their junior year at Dayton or San Antonio. This allows our students to stay home and enjoy Chaminade's lower tuition rates for three years, and also spend a year on the mainland to get a different life experience.

The Liberal Arts Niche

As you know, there are many educational needs and niches. The State university system responds to the democratic ideal of open access to higher education of all types. Hawaii Pacific College meets the need for a business college. Brigham Young University serves the goals of the Mormon Church in its religious work here and in the Pacific Islands. Hawaii Loa College and Chaminade University both seek to be classical liberal arts institutions.

In an age of specialization, there is tremendous pressure on young people to specialize early, and train for specific jobs in specific industries. Certainly, education should relate to jobs, and early specialization may be the right thing for many students. However, it can limit their prospects for long-term success.

I am a strong supporter of liberal arts because I think that a four-year liberal arts education is the best foundation for long-term personal growth and professional success. It is my own opinion that a liberal arts education relates well to top leadership and managerial positions, while specialized education relates well to lower and mid-level technical and staff positions.

A person with only a technical or specialized degree may move into a career more quickly and comfortably, and rise faster in the first few years on the job, than a person with only a liberal arts background. At a certain point, however, the specialist may reach a plateau. Promotion to top leadership and managerial positions may depend on a person's ability to understand people, the needs of

society, and the political process. Promotion may depend on the ability to integrate information and values, and see the world in a larger context, as a generalist, not a specialist. It is at this point that specialists often reach their limit, and generalists emerge as the leaders. My personal opinion is that generalists run the world. A liberal arts education can give a person the basis for being a successful generalist.

Chaminade's Goal: To Be the Finest Liberal Arts Institution in Hawaii

I believe that Hawaii needs an excellent liberal arts university which can provide Hawaii's students the basis for a career which leads to the top. I believe that Hawaii needs a liberal arts institution which is a high-quality alternative to the State system and to U.S. mainland colleges. My experience is that State systems generally do not provide the individual attention and value-centered curriculum which is traditionally provided by a small liberal arts college. And mainland liberal arts colleges are extremely expensive for Hawaii students. Thus, there is a need for an excellent, affordable liberal arts college right here in the islands.

Chaminade's goal is to meet that need. It is our goal to be the finest liberal arts institution in Hawaii, and then in the Pacific. There are five ways in which we intend to be the best:

First, we intend to be the best in terms of teaching. Teaching is our focus, and we are very good at it. Chaminade University provides a lot of individual and small-group attention, and the teaching is done by professors, not graduate students working part-time to get their Ph.D.'s.

Second, we intend to have the best community of scholars— students and teachers working together, interacting, sharing, and feeling a sense of common purpose and community spirit.

Third, we intend to be the best liberal arts institution in terms of stimulating intellectual and personal growth. Because we have dedicated, experienced teachers and a sense of community, we have the framework for true intellectual excitement and self-discovery.

Fourth, we intend to be the best in terms of leadership training. I have argued that a liberal arts education is an excellent background for a future leader. The education of leaders is a fundamental mission of the Marianists and of Chaminade University. We are now launching new programs which will enhance our focus on leadership training.

Fifth, we intend to be the best liberal arts institution in terms of holistic education. Because we are a private institution, we can educate the *whole* person. We can combine faith and reason. State universities cannot do that, and many private secular universities do not aspire to do that. We *can* do it, and we *aspire* to do it.

Chaminade University is proud of its Catholic heritage and Marianist tradition, which emphasize an open dialogue in the search for truth. The university welcomes students of all faiths. Our students are free to believe— or not believe— whatever they wish. Half our students are Catholic and half are not. Half the members of our Board of Regents are Catholic, and half are not. The Chairman of our Board is Protestant, and our three Vice-Chairmen are Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish. I am Protestant— the first Protestant President in Chaminade’s history.

While not forcing religious beliefs on our students, we strive to create an environment in which they can discover or strengthen their faith, and discover or examine their values. We know that merely observing faith from the outside, and living it from the inside, are different experiences. We believe that *living* a faith can make the world a richer, more beautiful, more meaningful place— a place in which true joy, in the deepest sense, is possible. The world of spiritual beauty is made available to students at Chaminade in a way in which it is not available at many other universities.

Conclusion

This, then, is what Father Chaminade had in mind. He had in mind the combining of faith and reason to educate the whole person, intellectually and spiritually. And he had in mind the education of leaders.

Our university, which is named after him, is committed to his vision. We are committed to educating the whole person, and to educating leaders. We seek to serve our island community by becoming the finest liberal arts institution in Hawaii and then in the Pacific. We see a need for that. With the community’s support, we can meet that need. We can help Hawaii’s students grow to their fullest potential as human beings, and achieve their greatest possible success as leaders.

Thank you!