(Address delivered by the Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., President, University of Notre Dame, at the 70th Annual Conference of the National University Continuing Education Association, Louisville, Kentucky, April 16, 1985)

If one might judge from the advent of the first millennium in the year of Our Lord 1000, this unusual benchmark of history is by its very nature the occasion of prophecies of gloom and doom. In its most drastic form, one hears increasingly, as we approach the second millennium, the year 2000, predictions of the coming end of the world. One can admit to a certain historical symmetry in this, but given the daily challenges that face us increasingly in the university world, I believe that we might more profitably admit to the uncertainty of the ultimate cataclysm, since the good Lord has told us that: "We know not the day or the hour." It seems best to leave it that way while doing all we can to eliminate the present nuclear threat, and then attend more seriously to our own affairs which are difficult enough, but at least knowable and manageable, too, one hopes.

In 1967, together with some twenty other educators and national leaders, I became a member of the Carnegie Commission on the Future of Higher Education. Six years and six million dollars later, in 1973, we published our final report. That same year we also published another report: "The Purposes and the Performance of Higher Education in the United States: Approaching the Year 2000."

One would have thought after about a hundred studies and reports -- a veritable bookshelf of white-jacketed books -- that there was little left to study or report upon. However, our genial Chairman, Clark Kerr

of Berkeley, could still discern a few problems, so a successor body was commissioned under his chairmanship, The Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education. Seven years later, in 1980, their final report was issued on the next twenty years for higher education. It was entitled "Three Thousand Futures."

For those of us engaged lifelong in higher education, it does focus our attention on the coming millennium by giving, in the first chapters, thirteen fairly obvious reasons for gloom and doom to come. These are immediately countered with fifteen reasons for hope. At least hope wins out numerically over gloom and doom, but only narrowly. One has the impression that the report strained a little to tip the balance.

The rest of the report, plus a very thick appendix, attempts to prepare all of us for what we might expect realistically in the field of higher education before the millennium arrives. We are told that there is no compelling reason for either panic or euphoria, that what is most certain is that the next twenty years -- fifteen now -- are full of uncertainty, that higher education's recent problem of managing growth has suddenly become a much more troublesome and difficult problem of managing retrenchment, and, finally, that the last three decades of full steam ahead through clear seas to wide open horizons now are to be followed by years of avoiding shipwreck and planning survival.

The report is clear on several salient points:

1. There is not one future, but three thousand futures for higher education, that being roughly the number of individual

institution and the title of the report. Each institution must study itself and prepare for its own future. No one else will do that for any of us.

2. Among the uncertainties, there are certain facts. For example, the students who will people our institutions in the year 2000 are already bown and compared to the present 18-24 age cohort, there are 23.3% less of them. Since students are the lifeblood of our institutions -- the public ones because they are generally funded per capita, and we in the private sector since we operate mainly on tuition income -- it does not require a prophet to discern the anguishes that this situation of fewer students will engender.

3. Another fact: more than half of the current faculties in higher education were appointed in the '60s and '70s. Since about three quarters of them are on tenure, nationwide, they will presumably be holding down the only available faculty positions until the millennium. Again, no need to speculate about what this implies for women and minorities (most of the current faculties across the land are white men). We can also easily imagine what it means for junior faculty competing for tenure, what it could mean for young intellectuals, especially in the humanities, who are seeking Ph.D.'s for teaching posts that do not exist.

4. Then there are the uncertainties: such as, which institutions get the fewer available students? Which colleges or departments within institutions? What happens to the normal academic dreams of new programs and new facilities in the face

of diminishing financial support from the federal and state government, already a fact, or from donors who now have their own new financial problems? What happens to the young scientist who can no longer be placed in a university laboratory where alone he can associate freely with his mentors and in the past be financed by government grants, to do that basic research which has made America unique? An aside: how economically productive and competitive will America be in the world of the future without this basic research which universities have largely provided in the past?

5. If future financing during a potential downturn in higher education is still in the realm of uncertainty, there is no uncertainty about what happens in higher education when financing shrinks and inflation grows. A whole series of things happen: positions are vacated without replacement and salaries presently paid get frozen or reduced; maintenance is deferred, which means you pay ten times more later to replace the whole roof for not having fixed the leak; laboratory equipment becomes not one, but two or three generations obsolete; library resources are cut, books are not bought, and periodical subscriptions are cancelled; computing facilities shrink or become outdated or both; programs without sufficient students or strength are cancelled; new promising programs are simply shelved for a better day; new opportunities lost for decades.

I could go on with this list, but it is depressing and I think enough is enough to get the general idea of what could

happen in the fifteen years to come. For all of you who read the educational journals, all of this will come as no surprise because there is not one thing I have mentioned that is not happening now, somewhere in higher education. In more than 100 institutions, it happened all at once in the past decade. They simply went out of existence. They are no more.

The Carnegie report also predicts that an unknown number of presently existing institutions of higher education (some mention the figure 200) are unlikely to be around to usher in the new millennium.

I am moved to say at this point, so much for the bad news as we march towards the millennium.

The good news can be put in promising capsule form and it is both a wish and a possibility. It goes: the strong institutions might just get stronger, not by growing externally, but by pursuing frugality, integrity, and quality internally. It will require a good deal of analysis by all parts of the university to be sure of the facts and to predict, as far as possible, the general uncertainties as they will or will not apply. This will call for leadership and understanding on all levels of the strong university, cooperation of all in applying stringent solutions instead of competing for scarce turf. The common good of the institution must once more be the guiding star. There must be hope, morale, pride, imagination, wisdom, and so many other great qualities at work together in both faculty and administration. Fundamentally, all must believe that in

a time of potential disaster, their institution can and will not only survive -- as Faulkner put it in accepting the Nobel Prize - but prevail.

Ernest Boyer, writing in a recent report entitled Corporate Classrooms: The Learning Business, puts it well: "The unique missions of the nation's universities and colleges -- to act as a moral force, to discover and transmit knowledge and larger meanings, to engage with integrity in the nation's service -- must be preserved and strengthened. The goal of collegiate education," Boyer continues, "at its best is to show how skills can be given meaning, place information in a larger context and discover the relationship of knowledge to life's dilemmas. The danger," he cautions, "is that, in a bid for survival, higher education will imitate its rivals, that careerism will dominate the campus as colleges pursue marketplace goals ... If that happens, higher learning may discover that, having abandoned its own special mission, it will find itself in a contest it cannot win."

Each institution has its own unique strengths, permit me to speak by way of illustration, about the university I know best -- Notre Dame. We are fortunate that so many of our students are sons and daughters of our alumni and alumnae. Few institutions, the Carnegie report says, today have their own personalities. This distinctiveness is crucial. Our alumni are always among the top few alumni groups in the country who generously support their universities. I do not believe that would be happening if we had become homogenized as have so many others who have lost alumni support.

The report also observes that more than half the students who begin college never finish. Retention efforts are then advised as a tactic for survival. Fortunately, here too Notre Dame is quite unique, losing generally less than 1% of our students in the freshman year -- the first difficult hurdle for them. We are now seriously considering how to strengthen our counseling practices in subsequent years.

What we all need at this historical moment is a tighter ship. But it will require vision and perceptiveness, strength and decision that have not always been present on more expansive and more affluent days.

Let me here give you the planning thoughts of two universities with larger endowments than my own, Duke and Princeton. Chancellor Ken Pye of Duke offers the following argument in his paper, "Planning for the Eighties":

> "A great private university must be composed of educational components which are better than or different from those in public universities, if in the long run, it will be able to charge higher tuition and continue to achieve a high level of support from corporations, foundations, and individual donors."

The financial forecast makes it clear that Duke can be qualitatively superior only if it restricts the scope of its educational programs and concentrates the resources available on fewer activities.

"Duke's position is not unique. Princeton University's Priorities Committee recently concluded that '.... in the face of financial adversity, it is better to do fewer things and do them well, than it is to spread the effect of a cutback evenly across all segments of the University.' "We must therefore" Pye continues, "engage in planning for retrenchment, not growth. We must be prepared to re-examine many assumptions which have been tacitly accepted in the past, and explore new ways to function more effectively, increase revenue, and decrease costs. No major change in the fundamental nature of the University is contemplated. But we cannot continue to do all we are now doing or do all that we continue to do in the same ways."

If I were allowed one ardent desire for all of higher education at the moment, it would be for enthusiastic and serious curriculum study and reform right across the whole academic spectrum of the university. We cannot go into heavy waters with wildly flapping sails, no firm hand at the tiller, and no real sense of direction. I would like us to forget for a moment all the ancient academic fortresses that are defended so persistently on the walls, even when fairly empty of treasure within. If the hour calls for new resolve, more imagination, a rerouting of our best traditions, a bright new focus to all our efforts, an attending to our special character with greater resolve, then we must be ready to re-examine

where faculty and student time is spent and how effectively and how efficiently or not, and to what over-all well articulated purpose we do what we do.

I have now come to the point where there is much more to say than there is time in which to say it. But then, you have all had that experience in your classes. Let me, in the few minutes which remain, touch upon several matters directly related to lifelong learning and the future of the university. In doing so, I return to the major themes contained in our report entitled, "Continuing Education and the Future," conducted through the Center for Continuing Education at Notre Dame in the early 1970's with support from the Kellogg Foundation. Today, more than a decade later, when the size and scope of many colleges and universities continuing education programs have mushroomed, I believe the notions advanced in that report are more relevant than ever.

First, while there has been some change during the last decade, there remains a widespread attitude that young people need formal education while adults do not, that the education one receives as a child or young adult is enough to carry one through a lifetime. When knowledge was more stable than now and wisdom was cumulative, there was some reason for highly structured, pre-established curricula for the education of youth. But now much of the knowledge and professional training of a graduate is obsolete fifteen years after graduation unless that education is continually updated through purposeful learning. The worst education is one which

produces a person who thinks he or she knows everything, that formal education is finished and left behind. One of the greatest products of a meaningful education is the intellectual curiosity that leads men and women to continued learning and makes them eager to learn as the experience of life unfolds.

Second, American educators should place a higher priority on moving toward a conciliation and articulation of core education and continuing education. On one side, we have a formal academic system that we support with public and private funds. On the other side is an informal structure that has grown up around the school and the campus, responding to people's needs for continuing education. Since schools and colleges can do only so much, and since lifelong learning is important, improved articulation is needed between what the schools and colleges do in the formal education system and what other learning situations and institutions can do to provide opportunities for continuous learning, whether it be in corporations, in the military, or in universities, too.

We must envision the broadest potential for the educational system -- both the formal and informal parts -- and determine how and when learning opportunities can best be made available. Some things are more readily learned by adults than by youth; it is pointless to keep insisting that everything worth knowing has to be learned in school before one embarks on a career. The public should have a much wider range of choices and a much stronger voice in where and how learning opportunities are provided.

Third, at the same time we are morally obligated not to reduce the availability of the symbols of upward mobility -- diplomas and degrees -- to the less-advantaged groups in society. We forget at times that a youngster from the lower socio-economic quartile, whatever his or her talent, has a much poorer chance of entering higher education than does a youngster in the top socio-economic quartile. Generations have been promised the rewards of middle-class affluence only if they make it through the conventional, formal academic system. It is high time that all Americans have equal access to educational opportunities on every level.

Fourth, while I will not here repeat the specific recommendations which grew out of the conference that are summarized in the book Patterns of Lifelong Learning, which I had the pleasure of co-authoring with Cliff Wharton and Paul Miller, they represent a useful set of action steps related to curriculum, to public policy issues, and to institutional initiatives which could help build a new learning system in tune with the needs of contemporary society.

By way of conclusion, let me return to the ten hard choices that individual universities and colleges must make for themselves, at whatever cost, that are outlined in the Carnegie report of which I spoke earlier.

1. Quality. This is central to the whole endeavor and should be the focal point to be emphasized and not compromised in any and all academic adjustments during the present time of crisis.

2. Balance. This means, in a word, that each university must decide what are its special priorities among all the possible academic programs available. Long-range planning and curriculum reform are especially relevant here.

3. Integrity. If we are to deserve widespread support from our constituency, we must be, as best we are able, without fudging, that which we profess to be. Integrity also speaks to the inner life of the institution - what we really stand for, and what against, not only institutionally, but in our persona lives as faculty, administrators, and students.

4. Adaptation. This means that we do not sell our birthright while planning to survive, grow, and become better, even in difficult times.

5. Dynamism. This means that we have to be lively and inventive enough to do with confidence and vigor what must be done -- to grow inwardly while not growing outwardly, to be able to substitute this for that, if this is better.

6. Effective use of resources. This speaks primarily to the money available, but also to the people. Faculty productivity in the United States has been unchanged in the past fifty years. There may be innovative ways of doing more with less, such as using the new technologies and arranging our working patters somewhat differently.

7. Financing. The report warns us not to expect more, even probably less, federal financing, although we might guide the

effectiveness of the support available -- for example, financial assistance preferably for able, but indigent students or for basic rather than applied research. If we are doing something unique, necessary, difficult yet promising, we will be supported no matter what the cost.

8. Leadership. Since I am here speaking of my presidential task (the report does ask for more presidential power, or at least, for fewer roadblocks and veto bodies), as well as speaking for the leadership role of Provosts, Deans, Directors, and department chairmen, may I just for once quote the report:

> "A period such as that ahead does not readily attract the ablest leadership -- the tasks are grinding ones, the victories too often take the form of greater losses avoided (i.e. damage control), the constituencies are more likely to be united around doing nothing than doing something.
>
> "The problem of administration becomes more difficult and the quality of leadership is likely to decline, and the new skills required for an 'all too rare mixture of compassion and realism.'"

I can assure you from past experience that this mixture of compassion and realism is rare because it is humanly difficult to pull off and then try to explain to oneself and others.

9. Private sector. How best to preserve the private sector of higher education which in 25 years has gone from 50-50 public-

private share of students to 80-20 today. All agree that we in the private sector are what makes American higher education unique in all the world. But how small a percentage can we become without losing that uniqueness or effectiveness? This question has direct relevance to federal aid programs for students, failing which, many will have to transfer from high-tuition private schools to lower-tuition public colleges and universities.

10. Basic Research. I have spoken to this subject earlier. Again, without federal support for young scientists to do basic research in universities, these potential new teachers will be attracted to do applied research supported by industry outside universities.

These ten all involve hard choices, but the report adds that no choice is the worst choice.

Whatever the challenges of the next fifteen years leading to a new millennium, I do not fear them and neither should you. The social responsibility of the educator is as old as Plato and as new as today's citizen protesting local or national priorities. Can we, through lifelong learning for all, build a new and broader educational system that will give deeper meaning to the quality of life and more urgency and wisdom to the amelioration of social needs? Society must ask instead a more important question: Can we afford not to do so? The learning system we already have is good, but it is not nearly good enough to face successfully the challenge of the next millennium.

National University Continuing Education Association

SECOND GENERAL SESSION

Tuesday, April 16, 1985

2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Presiding: Harvey J. Stedman
New York University
President, NUCEA

2:00 - 3:30 p.m. Archibald Room

Presiding: Harvey J. Stedman
New York University, President NUCEA

Signature of Excellence Award

Presentor: Adelle F. Robertson
University of Virginia, Immediate Past-President NUCEA

Recipient

Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., President

University of Notre Dame

Address: "Preparing for the Millennium"

Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, Presentor

Questions and Answers

3:30 - 4:00 p.m. Refreshment Break Cochran Room

Regional Theme Sessions

4:00-5:30 p.m. ..... Old River
Region I Theme Session
Presiding:
Gary Ensign, University of New Hampshire

4:00-5:30 p.m. ..... Kings Head
Region II Theme Session
Presiding:
John Lathrop, University of Maryland

4:00-5:30 p.m. ..... Court
Region III Theme Session
Presiding:
Thomas M. Hatfield, University of Texas-Austin

4:00-5:30 p.m. ..... Queen
Region IV Theme Session
Presiding:
Robert C. Mason, Northern Illinois University

4:00-5:30 p.m. ..... Water Poet
Region V Theme Session
Presiding:
Janet L. Hurley, Kansas State University