Susanna Douglas  
History 010-4  
Dr. Robins  
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Passion, Compassion, and Patience  

""Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate' (Lk. 6:36)...through compassion our humanity grows into its fullest" (Nouwen 7).

If I could describe myself in one word it would be passionate. Passion is not bad as long as it is not misdirected. Christ was passionate for the salvation of the world—passionate in that he suffered with the people. He took that passion and put into community, and he had compassion on them. As a Christian today in the context of Westmont—a liberal arts college—I am being called to the same passion, the same compassion, and called to live in the fullness of the time that I have been given.

How do I show compassion in a community if I do not know with whom I identify? As an American I have a national identity drawn from thousands who have gone before me, from those who have fought for the rights, land, and freedom that I now have. I am the product of European descent, which affects the way I read history because my ancestors are often the ones whose stories are told. As a woman I identify with half the world that has had male rulers in place since the dawn of history. The history of women as a minority group can often go untold, or is distorted through interpretation. And yet I owe so many women respect, in the past and today because I am allowed a vote, a career, and an education. With those I take up whole new responsibilities: do I identify with my nation because I share in electing leaders who go to war? Am I responsible in part for those wars? As a woman, am I called to be a voice for those women who have no voice? What is my community?"
As a student at a Christian college, my education has showed me that my identity is with the kingdom of God above all else. As Ahlgrim writes in his article against just war, “Martin Luther argued that there are two kinds of kingdoms in this world that will always be separate: the kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of the world” (14). I am called to peace, even if that means I disassociate myself with the rest of America that goes to war because I do not believe there is ever such a thing as a just war. “I find it hard to understand how one can be a Christian without being a pacifist” (Hauwerwas 425). I am called to truth-telling in history, even if that means I cannot fully participate in Veterans’ Day and the celebration of those who were in war. That may mean I need to do more research in order to read history from beyond the viewpoint of Anglo-Saxon, protestant men and include the stories of the losers in history, the impoverished people, the minority races, and the stories of women. But the hardest part of identifying myself with the Christian community is that it is just that: a community. I am called to be part of the community of the displaced. “The togetherness of those who form a Christian community is a being-gathered-in-displacement” (Nouwen 63). This means a calling to move away from what is comfortable to what is uncomfortable; to see the suffering of the world. It is an admittance of our brokenness, which can then bring us into greater solidarity with the brokenness of those around us. And for me the “we” is no longer identifying myself with America, as Baxter wrote about, but with the larger body of Christ.

This is where as a Christian body of believers we are called to be disciples of Christ. We show the same passion of Christ through being compassionate toward others. What this compassion looks like may be different elsewhere in the world. Discipleship in communist China, in war torn Iraq, and in nineteenth century colonial Africa is different from what it looks like here. Because Christianity is so closely connected to culture it is difficult to judge what true
discipleship is, as shown in Endo’s **Silence**. “On any account they were strong Christians. Even if their belief was simple and crude, it breathed conviction that had been implanted in Japan not by these officials nor by Buddhism, but by the Christian Church” (Endo 152). In the end being a disciple of Christ comes down to the heart, to the passion and compassion one has for Christ and those for whom he suffered. As a disciple of Christ I need to see that my actions affect not only myself, but the larger body of Christians as well. And in being at Westmont I have learned that in order to be fully in tune with Christ’s calling on my life, I have to slow myself down enough to experience time fully.

Therefore, discipleship means having **patience**, the root of which also means suffering. “Patience as an active entering into the thick of life opens us to a new experience of time. Patience makes us realize that the Christian who has entered into discipleship with Jesus Christ lives not only with a new mind but also in a new time” (Nouwen 96). Being at a liberal arts college I am learning the necessity of being patient, of experiencing time in the fullest, not always looking to the future for my life to begin. I have been created “for such a time as this”, to experience this community, to be uncomfortable, and to see the mission field that there is around me even at a Christian school. My calling right now is to a time of preparation for the future, as Westmont’s goals state, “graduates should be equipped with the tools to continue learning throughout their lives.” I can utilize these gifts to be more effective in whatever pursuit God has for me. But that does not mean that the present and its joys should go overlooked.

There is a need for patience even in studying. As Plantinga quoted Richard Foster, “Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people” (126). At a Christian liberal arts school I feel that there is a call past
academics, past sports, past music, and toward depth as a person. There is integration of disciplines so that a person can have a richer experience. But with the opportunity for so much knowledge and experience there comes an impatience to move on to the next thing, to apply what is being learned to the next stage in life, to find all the answers. I thought that by coming to Westmont I would find answers, but instead I am finding how to ask questions. That is a benefit of a liberal arts education: I am encouraged to ask questions, and to live with those questions when no immediate answers are found. To have patience and fully live in the moment of questioning, that is where I find depth. As Westmont’s Goals for Graduates says, graduates should be characterized by “patience in staying with a difficult search for truth when it requires protracted reasoning and effort.”

Another value of a Christian education is that the community in which I am surrounded is honest in its journey for answers and shows that having questions is a sign of responsibility in one’s faith. There is no barrier between education and the struggle for belief. And there is integration among disciplines to show the interconnectedness of various subjects, especially when looking at them through a Christian perspective. Time goes so quickly it is easy to forget what goes on around my personal journey of belief, my personal trials, and my personal struggles. Once again patience teaches what it means to be a compassionate Christian in my context. “Patience, thus, is the compassionate way that leads to the compassionate life. It is the discipline of our discipleship” (102).

But another part of being a disciple and showing compassion is looking further than simply the context in which I find myself. For to whom much has been given, much will be required (Luke 12:48), and I have been given much. In a liberal arts environment I am challenged in all disciplines to look past Westmont and ask myself what my responsibility is to
the rest of the world. When I came to Westmont I felt a college education was just one step between myself and doing mission work in a developing country. I was impatient, and in my impatience I was deaf to those who tried to teach me how to be globally conscious and understand my place in the world. I ignored the call on my life to be a disciple of Christ at all times of my life, which means praying for those in need even now. It means following Christ’s call to “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44) in the midst of war. It means “If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Matthew 5:39). And it means being a truth-teller now, not being selective about whose stories to tell in history, and what to remember about the past, as shown with conflicts over the Enola Gay controversy, or with the *femmes tonches*. Interpretations and opinions may change with time, but I am called to be a peacemaker no matter the situation. Even as a Christian in Santa Barbara, CA I can make a global impact by suffering with others in prayer and having my heart break for what breaks the heart of God.

With discipleship there will always be suffering, as was shown in Endo’s *Silence*. The Japanese were willing to go through intense suffering while still not apostatizing, though they did not have a lot of knowledge on which to base their faith. Nonetheless, for what they did know they were willing to die. As a Christian today, I should suffer in prayer with the Iraqis whose homes are being bombed by Americans. I should suffer with the poor and live simply so that I am practicing good stewardship with the resources given to me, rather than constantly consuming. This also includes being respectful toward other cultures if I am called to a foreign mission field, which was not shown in Bitek’s *Song of Lawino* between the Catholic priests and the Acoli people. Being a disciple daily means to “deny himself, take up his cross and follow me” (Luke 9:23). Part of my responsibility may simply mean being aware of the suffering that is
going on elsewhere and not allowing myself to live without taking action on behalf of others. As Westmont’s goals say, “Graduates should be knowledgeable about the world in which God has placed them because appropriate moral action requires full and accurate information in addition to sound moral principles.”

As a student at a Christian liberal arts college I know that I am being called to patience, to experience the fullness of time, if for nothing else than that the time here at Westmont is a precious gift that so many others would love to have but will never have the opportunity. I am being equipped here so that I may be as effective as possible wherever the Lord leads me. However I am not rushing forward to get there because I understand that the time I have been given should be lived in full now. My purpose for this time is to be a learner, not just about academics but also about life skills, relationships, future calling, and my own identity. I also have a responsibility to ask questions, to be active about praying for those who are suffering in the world even if they are my enemies, to be a voice for other women in the world who may be marginalized and silenced, and to be a truth-teller in history with as little bias as possible. I am a passionate person, called as a disciple of Christ to combine that passion with community to create compassion for those around me and for the rest of the world.
Engaging Gender

If history is an interpretation, how do we make it accurate?
Thesis: History is not accurate unless it includes the perspectives of both genders. This has not always been the case in the writing of history. Though contemporary views on the issue of gender equality are more progressive, we still cannot truly call ourselves an egalitarian society, which shows continuity with the past. There cannot be progress for women without first looking at the history of women’s role in society, which is often hard to see because of their silence. It is impossible to write an unbiased account of history.

I. Has or is gender being taken into account when writing history?
   A. To some extent
      1. Focus is on the winners, men, and West.
         1. “The roots of gender-based violence lie in the pervasive systems of equality that perpetuate the domination of men and the subordination of women” (4).
      2. Our textbook speaks some about women’s role
         1. Talks of specific women
         2. Talks of the role of women in a society.
         3. “Today, historians both male and female try not to restrict their work to the activities or testimonies of men. Yet, because men dominated politics, war, and industry for many years, oftentimes important historical studies have ignored women” (477).
      3. But it wasn’t a fair representation.
         1. We have viewed history through Western viewpoint.
         2. Women were often targeted for blame.
         3. *Femme Tondues*:
            a. “Unlike me, however, women were also punished for sexual misconduct” (214).
            b. “Women are seen as body, and if women’s bodies are the property of men and of the nation, then they must be punished in the body, by the nation” (216).
            c. Women are objectified and seen only as bodies or sexual beings.

   B. Contemporary position
      1. We have a façade of equality, but it isn’t real.
         1. “Male domination is not exercised today as it was earlier in the century, through propaganda urging women to return to their homes...Today it hides behind egalitarian laws, behind a minority of 'successful women', behind rational explanations—so many ways of anesthetizing our awareness of the unequal likelihood of success in school and at work” (436).
      2. Glass ceiling
1. Women must show they are strong to succeed in the business world, and to be strong means to become like a man.

2. Often there is a limit to how high women can climb in the business world.
   a. "As pay and status rise within a field, the number of women drastically declines...has led to a 'feminization of poverty'" (435).
   b. "Women democratically elected to hold the highest political offices overturn the ancient traditions of male political hegemony" (437).

3. No room for display of emotion or compassion.

II. Challenges of taking women and gender into account when writing history
A. Have been silenced
   1. From illiteracy
   2. From their role in society.
   3. Hard to uncover their stories and their points of view.
   4. "Violence against women must be recognized as one of the most significant causes of death on our planet" (2).

B. How do we tell history from a respectful point of view?
   1. While being truthful.
      1. Tell the good and bad.
      2. "...The historian's duty is to reverse the semiotic alchemy and turn myth back into history, all women into some women. For this to be possible, the anonymity of the individuals and locations involved has to end" (229).
   2. Not pointing fingers for wrongs done in the past.
      1. "In a scapegoating, the weak are targeted as blame is transferred; the finger is pointed at another, in order to diminish one’s own share of the blame. French society pointed at its Other, thereby making the Self innocent" (216).
   3. Maintaining a fair balance between genders.
      1. Not overemphasizing one gender’s perspective.
      2. Not overcompensating for the lack of female representation in the past by excluding men.

C. History always has bias
   1. Looking at history beyond a Western perspective
      1. It is hard to tell the story of women with whom we have little in common.
      2. Our Western viewpoint limits our understanding and interpretation.
      3. We haven’t grown up under oppression, or without rights.
      4. What is the contemporary viewpoint of women in non-western society?
         a. Oppression
            i. Afghani women, arranged marriages, sati in India, genital mutilation, the prevalence of rape for
females, sex trafficking, domestic violence, gender selected abortion and infanticide, prostitution.

ii. "...one woman in five will be the victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime" (1). Statistic from 2007.

iii. "Gendercide—a gender-selective mass killing—targeting women" (7).

iv. We are more aware of sexual violence occurring in other cultures than our own. There isn't as much of a place to discuss sexual violence here.

b. Assume they want democracy for rights.

i. Women in Europe preferred socialism because it provided more benefits and rights.

ii. "The chief quantifiable results to date of the shift to capitalist democracy for women are economic" (434).

c. The Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China: Article was surprising because we assume that America is more progressive with women's rights, but China gave women rights as well.

2. Recording history in the context of what happened; putting things into perspective.

1. *Femme Tondues*: "Fifty years later, images of femme tondues contribute to the destruction of the myth they originally helped to create" (229). One's interpretation of the same event may change depending on time and culture.

2. "Fifty year later, the pictures tell a different story, or rather, tell the same story differently" (227).

3. "If a woman had a problem in the 1950s or 1960s, she knew that something must be wrong with her marriage, or with herself" (481). Nowadays women would not immediately look at themselves for the problem, but that was the context in which they lived at that time. Their viewpoint and way to approach life was different.

3. Statistics can mislead and manipulate the data to support their point of view, whether good or bad.

1. Example: "Women in an Insecure World". There are many statistics given in this article, and perhaps one should be skeptical about the conclusions we draw. We may just as easily find statistics that show these in a new light.

2. Photographs speak volumes about the photographer's opinion.

   a. "In spite of claims made on its behalf, the photograph is rarely an unambiguous record of an historical moment, and is a complex and unreliable form of testimony on a number of levels" (219).
b. “Photographs of femmes tondues confirm the equation of male as Register, female as collaborator, male as heroic, female as guilty, male as combative, female as passive” (223).

c. “The photographs, over time, pass guilt from victim to victimizer; nobody occupies the moral; high ground. The ambivalence that the spectator feels punctures the vision of the morally unassailable new France” (225).

d. “The photograph is an integral part of the punishment” (229).

D. Can have opposition from the opposite sex when accounting for gender in the telling of history.

E. With who do we sympathize?
   1. Femmes tondues pictures
      1. Why do we sympathize with the women?
      2. Women were technically collaborators with the Germans.
      3. Do we sympathize simply because we’re women?
   2. Do we associate ourselves first with women?
      1. We are Christians first and foremost, regardless of gender.

F. Being compassionate.
   1. The historian being able to put themselves in the shoes of whomever they are writing about, and attempt to be neutral.

III. Benefits of taking women and gender into account when writing history

A. Women represent one-half of the world’s population so to not include them means history is not as accurate as it could or should be.

B. More well rounded point of view; women offer a unique perspective.
   1. “We must recognize and understand gendered inequalities if we want to come up with proposals for change that will promote security” (2).
   2. Gives emotion to history that may not be included in a male perspective.

C. History shouldn’t only be about the dominant in the world.

D. Shows more than just the spotlighted things in history
   1. Women in the homes.
   2. Women’s roles of supporting and helping the society survive.
   3. Femme Tondues: “Women represent, symbolically, the nation; literally, in times of war, women hold family and community together” (218).

E. Helps unify women who can empathize with one another.
   1. Feminine Mystique: bring to light the universal plight of women.
      1. “We can no longer ignore that voice within women that says: ‘I want something more than my husband and my children and my home’” (483).
      2. “Each suburban wife struggled with it alone” (480). Hopefully by including women in the telling of history, isolation like this won’t occur. They will see they are not alone.
   2. Encourages women to be active members of society today when looking at women models of the past who have had a great influence.
      1. “Well behaved women seldom made history.”
2. "Prized by both colleagues and the public for her fearless irreverence and ability to cut through English formalities, [Margaret Thatcher] brings feminist principles to her public duties" (437).

3. It helps us appreciate our position as 21st century Western women and the rights and freedoms that go with that.
   1. We often take the benefits we have for granted.

F. May help bring about changes for women under oppression.
   1. "Women's economic vulnerability contributes to their vulnerability to violence—manifest when a women cannot leave a violent partner because she has no other home or means of support, in abuse of female migrant workers, and in the trafficking of women" (8).
   2. "There cannot be any room for complacency in face of slaughter, maiming, rape and degradation of women...We must act now" (3).

G. May miss aspects of history if gender isn't taken into account.
   1. *Femmes tondues:*
      1. The conflict was not solely patriotic vs. collaborators but had to do with the need of the French men to reclaim their dignity and power by subjugating women as scapegoats.
      2. Women's sexuality was linked with politics, so understanding gender helps to understand politics.
      3. "The punishment of female sexuality was to safeguard the integrity of the new postwar republic" (219).
      4. "Confronting the unease provoked by the photographs means recognizing the gendered dimension of the purges and examining the unacknowledged relation between sexuality, violence, and politics that is present in the images" (229).

H. Gender transcends culture.
   1. How women are viewed, even from a young age, varies between cultures. This leads to better cultural understanding.
   2. "...many Burmese parents welcome the birth of a daughter as an assurance that they will have somebody to take care of them in their old age" (512).

I. Helps us to be compassionate Christians by viewing history through the eyes of the oppressed.

IV. Why might taking gender into account when writing history be significant for us as women?

A. We think as women that we have the ability to impact our world.
   1. This is a contemporary idea.
   2. "For the first time in European history, women as a group are beginning to assert values and to wield power on their own behalf, as well as for others" (438).
   3. Impacting the world used to only consist of the impact a women had on her family.
1. “Over and over, women heard in voices of tradition and or Freudian sophistication that they could desire no greater destiny than to glory in their own femininity” (281).

B. Understanding history can help us impact our world by looking at past examples of those who have:
   1. Fought for rights.
   2. Fought against oppression,
   3. Fought against social obstacles.
   4. Have gradually gained ground.

C. Looking at the oppression of women historically helps us understand of what we need to break free.
   1. Women still aren’t paid the same as men for the same job. (Seventy cents for every dollar.)
   2. There has never been a female president of the United States.
   3. Women are still objectified as sex-idols in our culture, de-emphasizing their contributive roles in society, and degrading them.

D. Even frustration about answering the question of gender in history reflects a contemporary viewpoint because it is obviously important to include women in history, but it has not always been seen as obvious. This causes us to question, “why not?”

V. Conclusion
Mariah Kimbriel
Susie Douglas
Lauren Hansen

Song of Lawino

Thesis:

While imperialism on African societies brought modernization and Christianity, it also brought dissatisfaction and confusion for the people and forever changed their culture. This calls into question whether imperialism is ever justified for the sake of Christianity, whether Christianity can be spread without also spreading Western ideas, and whether or not this influence should be avoided.

I. History and structure of the book
   a. Western influence on the writing of the book.
      i. Okot mixes African oral tradition with Western literary devices (specifically in poetry) to write the book.
         1. “Comparisons have more often been made between African poems and European poems than between African poems and traditional songs. Fortunately this emphasis is now changing” (1).
         2. He borrows Western literary forms.
            a. “From Western tradition he takes the idea of individual authorship, of spoken verse, of rhyme, of division into chapters, of the printed word” (8).
      ii. Okot used to be a Christian and lost his Christian commitment. This is reflected in the negative light shown on Christianity.
   b. Song of Lawino is also true to African tradition
      i. Okot wrote the poem initially in Acoli and did not sacrifice culture for understanding in translation. He translated literally.
         1. “This kind of rejection of Western traditions parallels his attempts to use African forms for his poetry” (4).
         2. “A less literal translation would have involved the intrusion of foreign elements into his poem” (9).
      ii. He puts the oral tradition to written form, attempting to connect the two.
         1. “Sadly, the written literature of the African nations has been clearly separated in many people’s minds from the oral literary heritage that is present in every African community” (1).
         2. “This written ‘Song’ form was born in Uganda while Okot was writing Song of Lawino” (2).
         3. He had friends revise the Song while he was writing it. “Thus even its method of composition is similar to that of traditional songs. A group of singers work together and continuously alter the songs as they perform them” (5).

II. What was constructive about imperialism to the African societies?
   a. Modernization
      i. Politics attempted to fight ignorance and disease. “They want Uhuru and Peace, both of them say they fight ignorance and disease” (111).
ii. The Westerners did bring some economic structure and stability. "And if they remove all Catholics from their jobs, who will do the jobs?" (106).

iii. White men brought technology.
1. "To me the clock is a great source of pride it is beautiful to see and when visitors come they are highly impressed" (63).
2. "The wonders of the white men are many! They leave me speechless!" (57).
3. "There is much water in my husband's house cold water and hot water. You twist a cross-like handle and water gushes out" (54).

iv. If the people learned to better manage time, as the white people do, there might be less rape at the time of famine.
1. "And when famine invades your villages and women take their baskets to go and beg food in the next village strangers will sleep with them" (69).

v. The Western medicine did bring benefits. "It is true white man's medicines are strong" (101).

b. Christianity
i. Western imperialism helped to spread Christianity, though that was not always seen as a good thing to the people.

III. What was destructive about imperialism to the African societies?

a. Brought dissatisfaction
i. Ocol is dissatisfied about the lack of assimilation of Acoli people to "civilized" Western ways.
1. Literacy and education
   a. "Ocol says he has no time to waste discussing things with a thing like me who has not been to school. He says a university man can only have useful talk with another university man or woman. And that it is funny that he should stoop so low even to listen to my questions" (88).
   b. "He says I am primitive because I cannot play the guitar, he says my eyes are dead and I cannot read, he says my ears are blocked and cannot hear a single foreign word, that I cannot count the coins" (35).

2. Beauty and Western women
   a. "[Tina] says a beautiful woman must be slim like a white woman" (40).
   b. "Ocol is no longer in love with old type: he is in love with a modern girl...the beautiful aspires to look like a white woman" (37).
   c. "Oh! my clansmen how aged modern women pretend to be young girls!" (39).

3. Clothing
   a. "The progressive and civilized ones put on blankets and suits and woollen socks from Europe, long under-pants and woollen vests, white shirts: they wear dark glasses and neck-ties from Europe" (45).
4. Western structure of time
   a. “...my husband insists what exact time he should have morning tea and breakfast, when exactly to have coffee and the exact time for taking the family photograph...” (64).
   b. “My husband says I am useless because I waste time... he says he has no time to waste. He tells me time is money” (67).
   c. “Time has become my husband’s master” (68).
5. Leisure
   a. Reading
      i. “He says he has read extensively and widely and he can no longer live with a thing like me” (36).
      ii. “When my husband is reading a new book or when he is sitting in his sofa his face is covered up completely with the big newspaper” (67).
   b. Smoking, cigars, cigarettes, and drinking
      i. “You smoke cigars like white men, women smoke cigarettes like white women, and sip some poisons from the glasses” (45).
6. Language
   a. “He says the Acoli language has very few words it is not like the white man’s language which is rich and very beautiful a language fitted for discussing deep thoughts” (88).
7. Religion
   a. “He says I am a mere pagan, I do not know the way of God. He says I am ignorant of the good word in the Clean Book” (73).
8. Politics
   a. “My husband is the leader of the Democratic Party” (104).
   b. “With the coming of the new political parties, my husband roams the country-side like a wild goat” (103).
ii. Ocol is dissatisfied with the Acoli practices
  1. Dances
     a. “He says Black people are primitive and their ways are utterly harmful, their dances are mortal sins” (36).
     b. “My husband laughs at me because I cannot dance white man’s dances: he despises Acoli dances he nurses stupid ideas that the dances of his people are sinful” (47).
  2. Sanitation
     a. “He says I do not know hygiene...” (91).
     b. “Ocol says I like dirt... he says I soil his white shirt if I touch him” (53).
  3. Medicine
a. "He says...I do not know how to look after the sick. He
says I do not know the use of quinine, and I have not been
taught how to prevent diseases" (91).
b. "My man is ashamed of me because my father was a well-
known diviner-priest: he says he is sick of my superstitions
and fears" (91).

4. Cooking and Food
   a. "My husband complains about food" (92).
   b. "Ocol says Black people's foods are primitive...he says
Black people's foods are dirty: he means, some clumsy and
dirty black women prepare food clumsily and put them in
dirty containers" (62).

5. Tribal relationships with others
   a. Family
      i. "My husband complains that I encourage visitors
who should not come into his house, because they
bring dirt and house-flies! He says my old relatives
smell horribly. And they have terrible diseases"
(91).
      ii. "Ocol treats his brother as if they are not relatives"
(104).
      iii. "Ocol says the way his mother brings up children
only leads to ignorance, poverty and disease. He
swears he has no confidence in the wisdom of the
Acoli" (92).
   b. Strangers
      i. "And when visitors have arrived my husband's face
darkens, he never asks you in, and for greeting he
says 'what can I do for you?'" (68).

6. Religion
   a. Names "My husband rejects me because, he says I have no
Christian name" (81).

7. Language
   a. "My husband says some of the answers cannot be given in
Acoli which is a primitive language and is not rich enough
to express his deep wisdom" (87).

8. History
   a. Ocol: "Of what relevance is it whether black men
architected the pyramid?" (129).
   iii. Ocol's rejects Acoli ways, gaining the scorn of his people.
      1. "The reading has killed my man, in the ways of his people he has
become a stump" (113).
      2. "Let us mourn the death of my husband, the death of a prince"
(116).
   b. Brought confusion
      i. Dances
1. “I cannot dance the ballroom dance…being held so tightly in public I cannot do it, it looks shameful to me!” (44).
2. Western forms of dancing were seen as civilized to white people, but in reality they were no more virtuous than African dances.

ii. Beauty
1. “[Tina] looks as if she’s been ill for a long time! Actually she is starving she does not eat, she says she fears getting fat” (40).

iii. Cooking and Food
1. “I am terribly afraid of the electric stove, and I do not like using it because you stand up when you cook. Who ever cooked standing up? And the stove has many eyes. I do not know which eye to prick so that the stove may vomit fire” (58).

iv. Time
1. “My husband says, my head is numb and empty because, he says, I cannot tell when our children were born” (72).
2. “Ocol tells me things I cannot understand, he talks about a certain man, Jesus. He says that the man was born long ago in the country of white men. He says when Jesus was born white men began to count years” (73).

v. Religion
2. “The things they shout I do not understand they shout like mad people. The padre shouts words, you cannot understand, and he does not seem to care in the least whether his hearers understand or not; a strange language they speak these Christian diviner-priests, and the white nuns think the girls understand what they are saying” (76).
3. “But the teachers of religion hate questions…whether they themselves have no answers I do not know, but I know they hate questions” (90).

vi. Politics
1. “I do not understand why all the bitterness and the cruelty and the cowardice, the fear, the deadly fear that eats the hearts of the political leaders! Is it the money? Is it the competition?” (107).

b. Imperialism changed the Acoli culture
i. Imperialism is destroying an appreciation for African vitality.
1. “When the girls sing…you [Ocol] hear only noises, noises that disturb you” (115). The beautiful melodies become disturbing noise.

ii. Westerners brought distain for the African culture. The Westerners came with an idea that their culture alone was valuable and this was reflected through the language they used.
1. “They are primitive, he insists, and he is a progressive man” (81, italics own).
2. “My husband tells me I have no ideas of modern beauty” (50, italics own).
3. In Song of Ocol, the Westerners feel they need to bring their idea of progress to Africa. "You barren empire remained 'closed' to progress, a vast natural animal reserve in which wild men and wild beasts roamed" (136).

4. People would go to Africa only to gawk at the primitive native people, showing their superiority complex. "Big game hunters and tourists flocked in from all corners of the world, white woman came to discover to see with their naked eyes what manhood could be" (136).

IV. Does Christianity ever justify imperialism and the altering of another culture?

a. Can Christianity be spread without also spreading Western culture?

i. No

1. Religion and culture are too closely intertwined to be separated. Can Christianity be understood outside of its cultural context?

   a. The spread of Christianity comes through relationships and accountability, which cannot happen without also bringing the cultural context of the people involved.

2. It cannot be spread without spreading culture, and neither should it be.

   a. It is our responsibility as Christians to discourage practices that contradict the Bible, even if they are cultural.

3. Even if Christianity comes from a non-Western culture it still carries cultural influences.

   a. If Asian countries were to bring Christianity to the African societies, they would influence the message with Asian culture.

ii. Yes

1. It is the missionary's job to be considerate of the culture in which they are immersed. This includes having respect for the existing traditions of the people.

2. Although it is difficult to be fully immersed, which includes living exactly as the people live and leaving behind Western luxuries, in theory it is possible.

3. Christianity can be spread without spreading Western culture, but not without the spread of culture.

b. Should spreading Western culture be avoided?

i. No

1. It brings sanitation
2. It brings medicinal aid
3. It brings technology that, depending on the way one looks at it, can improve the quality and efficiency of life.
4. It may bring the message of Christ, even if that message comes with some Western cultural influence.

ii. Yes

1. With the spread of Western culture there may be a rise in discontentment of the people.
a. It can offend others
   i. The media
   ii. The consumption and waste of Westerners.
   iii. Politics
b. We may impose our value system on the culture through our sense of superiority.
c. By introducing new technologies we may increase a desire for wealth and self-betterment that previously did not exist.
   i. Without exposure to certain modern luxuries the people do not know they exist and therefore cannot desire them.
   ii. This directly opposes what Christians are called to emphasize.
c. While it is impossible to spread Christianity without also spreading culture, the spread of Western culture should be as minimal as possible in an effort to preserve the native culture. This provides fewer obstacles for the gospel, and communicates the message in a way that is more conducive to the people’s reception and understanding.

V. Conclusion
The Meaning of Discipleship in Silence

Thesis: Discipleship means to strive to follow Christ’s example even in times of sacrifice, suffering, and the questioning of one’s faith. Though Christianity may change depending on the historical, cultural or social context, the Japanese Christians remained loyal disciples to their interpretation of the gospel as presented to them.

I. Discipleship means to sacrifice
   A. The monks sacrificed by coming to Japan
      1. Portuguese used to be accepted warmly because of the Japanese beliefs that the missionaries were bringing Buddhist knowledge from India.
      2. Because of fear of foreign powers and rising Christian influence, Tokugawa persecuted and exiled the Christians in Japan.
      3. Rodrigues and Garrpe were smuggled in.
         a. “…Under the circumstances we can not so much as stir outside our hut during the day. And yet I am determined, come what may, to seek out and find the lonely and abandoned flock” (30).
         b. “Now it was his turn to give something. But what could he give? The only thing he had to offer was his life and his death” (81).
      4. The priests sacrifice their way of life to bring light to the Japanese.
         “…[T]he poverty and squalor in which these peasants live is beyond anything you have ever seen in Portugal” (48).
   B. The Japanese sacrificed their safety and well-being to keep Christianity alive.
      1. They housed, fed and clothed the priests.
         a. “Since coming to this country, he reflected, he had caused nothing but hardship to these poor Christians; and he nibbled at the cucumber with his front teeth. He had received from them the little hut in which he dwelt; they had given him the clothing he now wore; he had eaten their food” (81).
         b. Monica gives the priest food even in captivity. “Won’t you eat something, father?” she continued; and with her manacled wrists she succeeded in taking from her bosom a couple of small cucumbers; then nibbling at one herself she gave the other to the priest” (81).
      2. They transported and protected the priests
         a. The people risked their safety to bring the priests to other towns. “Probably this young man would like to be relieved of the task of rowing me across the waters” (62).
         b. “Taking a spade that was hanging on the wooden door, Ichizo began to dig up the soil…This, it seems, is to be our future hideout in case of emergency” (37).
c. “No matter what happened they would protect the priests—such was their stand” (52).

3. They sacrificed time and familial ties.
   a. They were hostages. “So we need a hostage. From your number, please select three men and send them to Nagasaki tomorrow” (53).
   b. Kichijiro lost his whole family to martyrdom, though that was not of his choosing. “Ordered to tread on the picture of Christ, his brother and sisters had firmly refused to do so...His brothers and sisters were immediately brought off to prison...” (40).
   c. They spent time in prison for the sake of their faith.

II. Discipleship means to suffer
A. One of the ways to show discipleship is when one suffers with Christ, and will “deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23).
B. Though the Japanese may not have believed in the exact same God as the priests, and though their version of Christianity may have become warped in translation, their devotion and discipleship were unwavering. They shouldn’t be denied the title of disciple simply because they differed from Portuguese Christians on minute details.
C. Discipleship means to suffer in body
   1. Water torture
      a. Mokichi and Ichizo are martyred through water torture because they were disciples and would not apostatize.
      b. Twenty-four Christians die for their faith. “Wooden stakes were fixed in the sea at the water’s edge and the Christians were bound to them. When the tide came in, the water would reach up to a certain mark, and then recede. The Christians gradually became utterly exhausted and after about a week they died in the most terrible agony” (17).
      c. “[The magistrate] was forced to adopt a different course of action; namely, immersion in the hell of boiling water at Unzen. He gave orders that the five priests be brought to Unzen and tortured...” (5).
   2. The pit
      a. Was Ferreira a disciple?
         a. Ferreira may have been a disciple before he apostatized because he devoted his whole life to follow Jesus and sacrificed much in Jesus’ name.
         b. Disciples are not perfect. However, “…whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my father which is in heaven” (Matthew 10:33 KJV).
         c. Therefore Ferreira was not a disciple because he disowned God before man, even though they told him it was a formality and not a renouncement of faith.
         b. “It’s called the pit...they bind you in such a way that you can move neither hands nor feet; and then they hang you upside down
in a pit. These little openings are made behind the ears so that you
won’t die immediately. The blood trickles out drop by drop. It’s a
torture invented by the Magistrate Inoue” (145).

3. Imprisonment

a. The one-eyed man, Monica, and others suffer in prison and are
killed because they won’t apostatize.
   a. “The dead body of the one-eyed man lay prostate on the
      ground” (118).
   b. Monica drowned along with three others, rolled in mats.
      “Finally Monica was swallowed up by the sea” (134).

b. The priests are imprisoned multiple times for practicing
   Christianity. These imprisonments often included torture or death.

D. Discipleship means to suffer in mind

1. The Japanese were constantly burdened with fear about when the
   Samurai would come to interrogate and search the village. “The village
   itself as well as its inhabitants seemed to be accepting its suffering
   without protest” (72).

2. The Japanese could not trust others in the village because anyone could
   betray them for reward.
   a. “I don’t need to tell you what a temptation such an amount of
      money must be for these destitute peasants. Consequently, the
      Christians have almost no trust in the people of other villages”
      (34).
   b. Kichijiro betrayed the priests and villagers.
   c. Jesus said, “I have come to turn ‘a man against his father, a
daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-
in-law—a man’s enemies will be the members of his own
   household’” (Matthew 10:35).

3. Brainwashing and verbal abuse
   a. “But [the magistrate] quickly realized that words alone would
      never shake the resolution of these priests; so he was forced to
      adopt a different course of action…” (4).
   b. “And whenever one is captured it is Japanese blood that will flow.
      How many times have I told you that it is the Japanese who have to
die for your selfish dream” (147).
   c. “No, it was not for him that the peasants had been dying for so
      long. They had chosen death for themselves—because they had
      faith; but this answer had no longer power to heal his wounds”
      (136).

4. Though the priests were mentally suffering, they would not give up their
   faith. This meant they endured feelings of loneliness and had to remind
   themselves of their duties as disciples of Christ.
a. "I was a priest born to devote my life to the service of man. What a disgrace it would be to betray my vocation from cowardly fear...this is my duty" (39).

b. "We priests are in some ways a sad group of men. Born into the world to render service to mankind, there is no one more wretchedly alone than the priest who does not measure up to his task" (19).

E. Discipleship means to suffer in spirit

1. The priests suffered in their faith when they saw horrible occurrences and were caused to question their faith.

III. Discipleship means to follow Christ even in times of questioning

A. Why is God silent to the persecution of the Christians in Japan?

1. Rodrigues is upset that God does not respond

   a. "Could anything be more crazy? Was this martyrdom? Why are you silent? Here this one-eyed man has died—and for you. You ought to know. Why does this silence continue?" (119).

   b. "This sea stretched out endlessly, sadly, and all this time, over the seas, God simply maintained his unrelenting silence" (137).

2. And yet, though he is upset he attempts to see God's purpose for the suffering.

   a. "I do not believe that God has given us this trial to no purpose. I know that the day will come when we will clearly understand why this persecution with all its sufferings has been bestowed upon us—for everything that Our Lord does is for our good" (54-55).

   b. Rodrigues tries to find reason with what Ferreira tells him about God's silence. "If these people had not died for their faith what a blasphemy to man! Ferreira is lying" (149).

B. Is God really silent?

1. The faces of Jesus

   a. Rodrigues constantly calms his questioning by looking to the face of Jesus. He knows Jesus suffered like he is suffering now.

   b. "I am always fascinated by the face of Christ just like a man fascinated by the face of his beloved" (22).

   c. "Yet tonight he focused all his attention on the emaciated expression on those cheeks" (137).

2. In the prison, Rodrigues sees that God is not silent, but is suffering with him. "Now in the darkness, that face seemed close beside him. At first it was silent, but pierced him with a glance that was filled with sorrow. And then it seemed to speak to him: 'When you suffer, I suffer with you. To the end I am close to you'" (161).

IV. To the Japanese, discipleship means to remain loyal to the gospel that was given to them.

A. Is it still discipleship if Christianity has been influenced by another religion?

1. Buddhism had an influence on Christianity in Japan.

   a. Certain sects of Buddhism also have a savior and offer merit.
b. "And supposing the God whom those Japanese believed in was not the God of Christian teaching..." Ferreira murmured these words slowly, the smile of pity still lingering on his lips" (147).

c. "And one father gave a clear answer: the salvation that Christianity speaks of is different; for Christian salvation is not just a question of relying on God—in addition the believer must retain with all his might a strength of heart. But it is precisely in this point that the teaching has slowly been twisted and changed in this swamp called Japan" (187).

2. Yet the Japanese Christians are still disciples because the priests were not there to instruct them and they followed what they knew, which was inevitably influenced by their surrounding religions.
   a. Offices of Jiisama and Tossama were made, providing spiritual leaders in the absence of Christian priests (33).
   b. The Japanese strove to keep the sacraments they believed to be important to the Christian faith (33).
   c. "On any account they were strong Christians. Even if their belief was simple and crude, it breathed a conviction that had been implanted in Japan not by these officials nor by Buddhism, but by the Christian Church" (152).
   d. "Christianity and the Church are truths that transcend all countries and territories. If not, what meaning is there in our missionary work?" (150).

B. Is it still discipleship if Christianity has been influenced by the translation?
   1. The Japanese might have confused their sun god Dainichi with the Christian God Deus. This led to confusion on whether they believed in the same God.
      a. Kichijiro asks, "Why has Deus Sama given us this trial? We have done no wrong" (54).
      b. "From the beginning those same Japanese who confused 'Deus' and 'Dainichi' twisted and changed our God and began to create something different. Even when the confusion of vocabulary disappeared the twisting and changing secretly continued. Even in the glorious missionary period you mentioned the Japanese did not believe in the Christian God but in their own distortion" (148).

2. Yet it is still discipleship because the Japanese followed what they knew to be the gospel through the translations given to them by the priests, and they followed those beliefs well.

C. Is it still discipleship if Christianity has been influenced by the customs?
   1. The Japanese put great emphasis on the beads of the priest because they felt objects had power.
      a. "Finally, I had to take my rosary and, unfastening the beads, give one to each of them. I suppose it is not a bad thing that the Japanese Christians should revere such things; but somehow their whole attitude makes me uneasy. I keep asking myself if there is not some error in their outlook" (45).
b. Yet it is still Christianity because the Japanese lived in such poverty, and were most likely illiterate, so having something tangible to represent their faith made it real to them. To them it was not wrong to idolize such possessions.

2. "This problem of my reconciliation of my Catholicism with my Japanese blood...had taught me one thing: that is, that the Japanese must absorb Christianity without the support of a Christian tradition or history or legacy of sensibility...No doubt this is a peculiar cross that God has given to the Japanese" (xvi).

D. Is it still discipleship if Christians trample the fumie?

1. "He will now trample on what he has considered the most beautiful thing in his life, on what he has believed most pure, on what is filled with the ideals and the dreams of man...The priest placed his foot on the fumie. Dawn broke. And far in the distance the cock crew" (171).

2. It is not still discipleship if one tramples the fumie because this gesture denounces God before man, which directly opposes the scriptures. Though the Japanese authorities called this a formality, they understood that by forcing the priests to trample the fumie they were breaking the foundation of the Christian faith in Japan.

3. Both Rodrigues and Ferreira lost their faith in consequence of trampling on the fumie, and were rejected by the rest of the Christian church, showing the severity of the action.

V. Concluding thought on the application of discipleship in the context of our culture

A. Does Christianity exist outside of culture?

1. We believe that there are certain truths that remain constant across historical, cultural, and social barriers.
   a. God is God, and there is no other God but Yahweh.
   b. Jesus is the Son of God, divine, who died to save humanity from its sin.

2. Admitting this, we also believe that Christianity cannot be wholly separated from the culture in which it exists, and is constantly being transformed and influenced by those cultural factors.

B. How has the church today been influenced by its context?

1. Accepting homosexuality in certain churches.
2. Supporting war.
3. Lack of diligence in America because there is no persecution.
4. Wealth influences what our responsibilities are to the rest of the world.
5. Questionable integrity of leadership, and the existence of church politics.

C. How does this impact our understanding of discipleship?

1. We realize that one can be a Christian without being a true disciple.
2. We recognize that discipleship often comes with suffering, and sacrifice. Though questioning is inevitable, we need to prevail in order to find a deeper understanding of our faith.
3. To be a disciple is to strive to follow Christ in our lives, and that does not mean we need to be perfect, but rather that we daily take up our crosses for Him. Discipleship means to suffer with others as Jesus did.
I am a fragment of a mirror whose whole design and shape I do not know. Nevertheless, with what I have I can reflect light into the dark places of this world—into the black places in the hearts of men—and change some things in some people. Perhaps others may see and do likewise.

That is what I am about. This is the meaning of my
June,

you put together a very compelling portrait. I also very
creative one. I thought long and hard about what you wanted the
image to convey. Did you notice the fact that the glass also
reflects the face of the person who looks at your portrait?
What do you think about that? 😊 I wonder if you could say a little
Self Portrait

When thinking about what kind of person I am and how I would describe myself, the first
word that comes to mind is [passion]. I am a very passionate person. This can be a blessing and a
curse. I never feel mediocre about something; I either absolutely love it or I abhor it. Passion can
be horrible if it is not directed toward Jesus and His kingdom. However, as I’ve gotten older I’ve
grown to see that passion can also be a tool when put in the hands of God. So that is around what
I wanted to center my portrait and the emotion I wanted to portray as I reached toward the sky.

I took this picture at Westmont because I have now entered a new stage and chapter in my
life at college. I feel this picture exemplifies not only passion, but also some of the freedom I
have now attained as an adult who is paving her own way in the world. I purposely left my hair
down so that it would evident that it is a woman in the picture. And I am an independent and
strong woman; one who does not shy away from challenges and who is unafraid to speak her
mind. I wanted to take a strong stance to show that aspect of myself because my mother was an
activist during the women’s rights movement and I am proud of that legacy. The culmination of
all of those women’s efforts has brought me the privileges I have today as a female in an
egalitarian society.

The sun is rising in the background because it is as though a new day has begun in my life,
and I am embracing the changes with arms open wide. I have literally waited my whole life for
college and everything that goes with becoming independent. Now here I am, and the feeling is
somewhat surreal because I am all alone. In the photo there is one person, which is important
because my greatest fear in life is loneliness. I am the kind of person who never needs to be

This is a

good thing

know

out yourself
alone. I have always had such a strong community of family and friends, and now I am starting
over. I am also a twin, and this will be the longest I have ever been away from my twin brother.
That bond is too important to be ignored because he is so much a part of who I am. Therefore, I
embrace freedom in this picture, but with that comes new and uncharted territory that I need to
forge by myself.

But I am never alone. While there is only person in this picture, the sun is shining even
brighter in the background, so bright in fact that you cannot see me. I am a mere outline in its
light. Coming to Westmont has been the biggest challenge of faith for me because I want to
become a missionary and college was never in the picture for me. I cannot afford it, especially
working off debt on a missionary’s income. I almost changed my mind the week before I came to
Westmont because I was sure that college was not what God had for me, and my heart was set on
missions. That week I was visiting my sister in Ecuador where she is a missionary, and I felt that
God was silent to my prayers asking for guidance. I wanted clarity for my future so badly, yet
nothing was clear. I felt God was telling me that I do not need clarity. I need to trust. And that
trust would come through brokenness.

Thus, in this picture I am invisible. My face is not clear because I am walking by faith,
trusting that God is good and He will work His will in my life; His good, pleasing and perfect
will (Romans 12:2). And right now that means I don’t have clarity so the picture does not either.
I wanted to symbolize that I decrease as He increases in my life. My features can fade but what I
desire in my life is that God’s light shine through me, and that that is all people will see. That is
how I come alive.

I have my arms open because I want to be open to God’s will in my life, wherever and
whatever that may be. If that means going to work in an orphanage in Mexico, witnessing to
people in a subway in New York, or helping AIDS victims in Africa, I am there. For that reason I left the picture open with an expanse of sky as well; there are only trees along the bottom for wherever on this earth I am to go. This reflects my culture because I am an American, and as such I have been born into ridiculous privilege which the rest of the world often knows little about. To whom much has been given, much will be required (Luke 12:48) so I want to reflect the light of Jesus into the places in the world that are broken and in need of aid. Through my brokenness, God’s light can shine all the stronger. Thus I included the broken mirror and the quote to show how I am a vessel of God’s light, that is my function in life. I die to self so Susie is no more, and my hands are stretched out because I want to take up my cross and follow Him (Matthew 16:24).

I do not know why God has called my to be a student right now, and that is part of the lack of clarity in my life. I’m not sure what changes have taken place in my life and what all that means or looks like so I don’t know what I look like in the photo. I believe I am in a time of preparation right now, so I desire to learn and absorb as much as possible while I’m here at Westmont. That way I can be as effective of a vessel as I can possibly be for God’s light. I don’t believe in giving anything less than the best in what I do, but instead I throw myself headlong into an experience because time is precious and life is short.

Though I don’t know what all my purpose is here at Westmont, I understand that I am in a new community and that I have the potential to bring about change and influence in the way I live my life to those around me. I don’t know what all this community brings yet either, so the background of the photo is black. I simply trust that God will continue to mold me and shape me into His image, which means I must be broken like a fragment of a mirror. But I have the capacity to do much good even in my brokenness and impact the thousands of people and
communities with whom I come in contact during my life by reflecting light. That is the meaning of my life. That is what I am all about.

I am a fragment of a mirror whose whole design and shape I do not know. Nevertheless, with what I have I can reflect light into the dark places of this world—into the black places in the hearts of men—and change some things in some people. Perhaps others may see and do likewise. That is what I am about. This is the meaning of my life.

-Alexander Papaderos
What it Means to Have a Christian Liberal Arts Education

In considering what it means to have a Christian Liberal Arts education I am reminded of the criterion I valued when looking at colleges to attend. The most important thing to me in looking at schools was that the college have a Christ-centered atmosphere that would foster and encourage me to grow in relationship with Christ, not just to grow in knowledge about things Christ-related, but to grow in depth, striving for a deeper relationship with Him. The reasons for this are discussed in the three articles by Weil, Plantinga, and Westmont College. 

Weil’s article talks of how to effectively study in a way that can further our relationship with God. He says that this can be done by a conscious decision to view every academic subject as a pursuit of attentiveness that can be applied to our prayer lives with God. Through the pursuit of attentiveness and humility we can make every assignment an opportunity for spiritual growth, which can be used outside of the classroom in the way we relate to others. While I agree with the idea that we can and should do everything to the best of our abilities as though working unto God, I am not of accordance with his specific ideas on how to open one’s mind to allow the most precious gifts in life to come to us. I believe one of the benefits of education is learning how to orient myself so that I am better able to face the world as an organized and responsible adult, which I think will often mean that I will need to seek out the most precious things of life. A Christian Liberal Arts education helps me learn how to search out the truth and things that are
really important. I do not think it is important to read into every detail of the art of education as carefully as Weil does.

In the second article, Plantinga gives a listing of different benefits that a Liberal Arts education provides that would not necessarily be found at a secular school. He says that education at a Christian college is beneficial because Christ is woven into the curriculum and heart of everything that goes on at the college, and there is not a barrier between education and one’s belief. It helps Christians grow in continuity with Christ, learn discipline in a safe environment, learn how to seek knowledge for the rest of our lives, be able to answer others when questioned, develop virtues and compassion, and shape themselves into the people they want to be for the rest of their lives.

Lastly, Westmont College’s list of things they want their graduates to go away possessing speaks of the desire for the education to be for the entire person of the student, and not only for their intellectual growth. Westmont understands that the years in college are some of the most formative years in a young person’s life. It desires that students walk away having grown into people who are globally aware, understanding how to grapple with differing ideas and not feel defeated, how to have discernment, be responsible stewards of God’s gifts and blessings, have a greater sense of identity in Jesus Christ, and be equipped with tools that will serve them for the rest of their lives. To me this reflects the value that Westmont wants to provide their students with information about subjects of interest, but it is also concerned with the spiritual lives and developments of its students. It has a sense of priority in respect to Christ coming first over all else. Christ reigns preeminent in the midst of everything else we do or study.

For me, a Christian Liberal Arts education embodies the principle that Christ should be part of every aspect of my life, including my education. I have teachers who are interested in how I
grow in understanding of the subject and how I can relate that to my spiritual life. I have the benefit of a Liberal Arts education, which means I can dabble in a variety of disciplines and become a well-rounded individual, but I can also learn about these various things from a standpoint that they can all benefit to me as a Christian, and they can all be used outside of school to help to bless others. I do not feel as though I am limiting myself in any way, but I am able to gain experiences that teach me to be a compassionate Christian.

The Richard Foster quote that Plantinga included in his article aptly defines what I hope to get out of a Liberal Arts Education. "Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people." I feel that at Westmont I am encouraged to grapple with difficult questions and come out with a deeper understanding of who God is. I can see myself as being part of a larger sphere of Christians who are all trying their best to live outside of their bubbles and be the most real, honest, and compassionate human beings they can be.

Through a Christian Liberal Arts education I see that Christ does not need to be separate from any part of my life, but rather can and should be integrated into everything I do. I am taught a variety of disciplines so that I can be most effective. And most of all, I grow deeper and deeper in my relationship and understand of Jesus Christ and what it means to be His follower now and for the rest of my life.
Broken Faces Notes

- Is there such a thing as a "just war"?
- Reading Twain brings up the idea that both sides are praying for victory, perhaps even to the same God.
- Those who use the Old Testament as justification take it out of context. There are many Old Testament laws and practices that we do not follow today.
- The Old Testament was part of the Old Covenant, but when Jesus came he brought with him a New Covenant, and a new example. This is the culmination of, and freedom from, the Mosaic laws. Therefore it is to Christ that we should take our example of warfare.
- Jesus preached an eye for an eye: non-retaliation. He preached to love your enemies and pray for them.
- God has numbered the tears in a bottle, and counted the hairs on the head of the one being killed.
- Jesus said to even look at a man with anger is the same as murder. He says not to carry a grudge and go to God, but first go to the person. If he cares so much about these small actions, how much more drastic is outright murder?
- Jesus said those who live by the sword will die by it.
- Our kingdom is not of this world.
- Paul says to overcome evil with good, and not to repay evil with evil. Treat an enemy with kindness.
- Our struggle isn’t against the enemy of flesh and blood, but that of the spiritual realm.
- We overcome evil with love.
- Paul is not telling the people in Romans to join the authorities who fight, but to submit to them.
- We do our battle through prayer.
- The existence of armies, even to prevent war, also keeps war alive.
- In a "just war" the death of civilians is only justifiable if they are "unavoidable victims" of an attack.
- If we justify burying men in the ground, and one soldier even said he enjoyed it, so what will we justify next?
- They take the war home with them.
- Make people faceless so that they can kill them. Make them a "they".
- There will always be violence because the human race is violent.
- A change comes from a minority rising up and challenging the majority.
- No historic battle is identical to another, and from each we learn new things.
- People come back broken, in body and mind.
- The soldiers are not without name and identity. They are people with families and lives, and they feel.
- Their faces are like puzzle pieces poorly put together.
Poems

World War I
Like puzzle pieces broken apart, and put back together to form something new.
New because something first had to die. New, but someone first already died.
Not new. History repeats itself as the veins of human nature spill to the trenches.
The ground does not discriminate nation, scarring the dirt with bloody tears twice cried.

Iraq
It’s just war. A just war. All just war. It’s just wrong.
Justice as hard to come by as answers. As an ending.
Oily money through unclean hands. One day someone will answer.
The casualties: unavoidable. As is the profit. The war is brought home.
Losing the only just war—on our knees.
Susie Douglas
History
Professor Robins
11.5.07

Explanation

Jesus goes out of his way to stress that his radical teaching on loving enemies sets his disciples apart precisely because it is not common-sensical (Luke 6:32). His disciples aren’t to love and bless those who persecute them when it makes sense to do so and to fight back and perhaps kill them when it makes sense to do so (that is, when it’s “just”) for, as a matter of fact, it never makes sense to love and bless a persecutor, and it always makes sense to fight back and kill them if you have to.

...Gregory A. Boyd, The Myth of a Christian Nation, 2005 p 168

I began the poem on World War I with speaking about puzzle pieces because it was what came to mind when I saw the pictures of the men with broken faces. They looked as though their faces were puzzles poorly put together, and just as that relates physically, I’m sure many were poorly put back together mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Just as these men got new faces and teeth put together, so the landscape was completely changed and now is new and potholed with the craters as reminders of war. There were totally new lifestyles because these men come back home and brought the war with them. Women are also given new status during this time as being useful for the war effort, which makes new role expectations. There was a new power as the U.S. emerged after the pieces of the war were settled and starting to be put back in place. Yet there were so many lives no longer being lived, bringing new emptiness to millions of families around the globe.

Yet new is not the first word that comes to mind when speaking of war. War is not a new concept, and while there have been many attempts to justify it and to end it, war is too far engrained in humanity for it to ever be extinguished (Matt. 24:6). Human nature is inherently bad and prone to conflict. I do not believe in the justification of war, which is why I include the two references to Christ. While all of this is new and many men are sacrificing their lives for the