

00:00 - 04:39 Introduction, change of attitude

I thought it would be easier for me in response to that letter simply to sit down with my tape recorder and respond to the questions you ask and give you some of my impressions about what was going on at PLU in the academic year 1961-62.

I suppose I want to start with some kind of rejoinder which is prompted by your questions or your question. Have your attitudes about individuals and personalities changed with the passage of time?

Certainly they have. As you will notice from the documents that I'm sending, I was deeply involved, maybe not so much out of a sense of being recruited as from the kind of piety that fueled myself in those days and you'll see that I was somewhere to the right of Jerry Falwell and that I would have also been one of his real champions in those days because you'll notice that we were saving not only PLU but the world for some kind of understanding of the faith which I have – now I hope it's growth – but I think I've grown past that.

I think one just kind of general background thing might be helpful in understanding the relationship that developed between Eastvold and myself. I came of course from Selbu Lutheran which in those days had been a great supporter of PLU because it was so much in sympathy with the theology and the attitudes of Eastvold and had given the school a great deal of money and one of the members of Selbu was on the Board of Regents at that time, John Sather being his name and so when I was elected student body president in an overwhelming victory of two votes or with an overwhelming victory of two votes I was kind of natural for somebody to relate to Seth.

My grandfather T.A. Michael Bust also had been some kind of a friend of Seth's over the years although he had opposed him when he ran for president of the church when Fred Shutz was elected but I came to the office with good credentials as far as Eastvold was concerned and with a kind of piety that really fit into what he thought the school ought to be about. It really is my judgment that for whatever the motivations or reasons that people were attempting to get rid of Seth it was time. It was almost as if the child that he had really nurtured into the kind of institution PLU had become by the time he left that it was like an adolescent that was out of control as far as he was concerned as it tried to express its own personality and he didn't have the foggiest in my judgment now about how to deal with that change.

So I think probably on the whole what happened was a very good thing and how it happened I think was regrettable on every side. In the documents that I'm going to send you they are mostly all letters and if you have or if they have files of the Mooring Mast from that school year I'm sure you can get all kinds of insight into how deeply involved the students were not only student leaders but also the rest of the student body because Mark Lono who was the newspaper editor then and has since gone on I think to still have some of the same fairly conservative views that really had politicized the Mooring Mast and Milt Nesvig was the advisor and I'm not sure at times Milt knew what was even in the paper and when he did what to do about it although he did cut one

of my articles. I do have also if it would be of any interest to you quite a number of at least the columns that I wrote which would document again both my piety and my involvement that was driven by that piety and would give more of a flavor of what we'll be discussing here although I think again there's more here than you probably need or want.

I'll just go through the questions that you've addressed in the letters and touch on them briefly and then if you have any more questions or anything why you can get a hold of me and we can talk further.

04:39 - 07:04 How did these events appear to student leaders?

First of all how did these events appear to student leaders and to me well they appeared to me in those days that Satan was at work wrecking the university and that whatever the substantive issues were that finally led to Eastvold's retirement. I'm not sure that we ever understood those that even ever really knew about them there was of course the the innuendos in regard to the whole situation at ocean shores and Don Eastvold's involvement in that and Seth's involvement and the investment money that PLU had in there and the appropriateness of all of that and that whole kind of thing. It did seem to me that part of what happened the coalition at least that formed on both sides and especially the coalition that formed on the negative side the side that wanted Seth out and wanted the school to begin to move in some new directions part of the personal motivation that probably came from the days when Seth had ruled with a real iron fist and had made some natural enemies of people who would be normally allied with him because he passed over them in selecting various people for department heads and that whole kind of thing.

I think the reorganization into the university as I recall was a painful thing for several faculty members who did in fact get passed over. But the overwhelming appearance for myself as a student body leader was certainly a theological one and that we had to stand up to make sure that the university remained strong in its witness to Jesus Christ and that that was a for us that term witness to Jesus Christ had a peculiar and particular bent to it. And I think when Gerhard Belgum came to do spiritual emphasis which again if you look through the Mooring Mast and all of the BS that ran around that time he really fueled that because he of course had been a cohort of Knut Lees when they were both at Luther College and had gone through a similar kind of event I think at Luther College a couple years prior to the thing falling apart at PLU.

07:04 - 16:32 Were you well informed?, key people

So I've already addressed myself a little bit to the question "Were you well informed?" I think the answer to that would have to be "Not very much at all." We were not privy to as I mentioned to some of the forces the objective kind of reasons why it probably was necessary for Seth to leave and everything got distilled down into these rather simplistic theological motivations. I was recruited whether fairly or unfairly I think because of my reputation among people as someone who came from Selbu and who had this kind of piety that opposed dancing and all of those other kind of evils on the campus that the side that was opposed to Seth probably made no effort I don't remember them making any effort at all to recruit me nor do I remember any particular persons coming to me to recruit me I think I was and am the kind of personality that tends to jump into things regardless of whether I know anything about it or not and form opinions and get involved and so I probably sought them out as much as anyone.

The key people that I got information from or who used me and I used them would probably be John Sather who I mentioned was a member of the Board from across at that time he used to give me some information which I'm sure was somewhat privileged from the Board of Regents I got information I was a good friend of John Keithy who I think was helpful to me in kind of keeping some balance in the whole thing but who was for his own kind of reasons a real strong supporter of Seth even though he was much more liberal and open he was a strong supporter of Eastvold. Lucille Giroux was someone else who also encouraged me to keep going in terms of the kind of directions that I was going in. Kelmer Roe of course another influence that fed me information and kept some of the fuel in the fire going.

Those are the people that at least at this point in time that I particularly remember. Now in terms of my attitudes towards individuals and events it changes the spring 1962 climax was reached I don't recall that that was true I think the people who I had earlier on identified as good folks and bad folks stayed through that whole period of time and it wasn't until probably some kind of liberalizing process took place during seminary and maybe in the years immediately after that that I began to change in my understanding about what was needed and I think quite frankly the kind of leadership that I saw from a distance that Mortvedt provided that when things were opened up a little bit and all that kind of thing everything didn't in fact go to hell in a handbasket but at that point in time my ideas had not changed you'll see even in terms of the kind of affirmation of Seth that is included in the May 1931 statement that we made to in which we dedicated the year whatever it was to Seth it's one of the documents that I'm sending to you where we say it was a student proclamation presented to Dr. and Mrs. Eastvold and in which we even speak of them as truly loving parents. I think that's a very interesting image now in terms of thinking of the president of the university and his wife as parents that wouldn't fly very well today I'm sure and I'm sure that that was part of what we saw them doing is kind of providing parental supervision and guidance and surrogate parents from for our parents who were back home obviously my attitudes and about individuals and personalities of change with the passage of time I think for many of us.

Walter Snackenburg was kind of the personification of this deep dark force that was out to wrest the university from a proclamation of the Lordship of Christ. I've come to see that that he may well have been a person with a better sense about what Christian higher education was all about than certainly than many of the people who were feeding information to me and who had been important in my kind of formation of attitudes that at PLU I would I've often told people and I've talked about this that that if I knew then what I knew now I would probably have been on the other side but probably with the same kind of passion because that tends to be the kind of person I am and was at that time there certainly were good guys and bad guys and good gals and bad gals for all kinds of different reason. Some of them you know as I've indicated earlier I believe now we're operating purely out of some kind of personal animosity towards Seth he had passed over them or treated them in an unkind or uncaring way sometimes for good reasons and and sometimes not.

I know having been a business major that when we went to university status he just literally wiped out the business school which in my judgment was a good move because it it was pretty weak and and I think he did in fact initiate and bring on board people who were great teachers and and obviously have done good things with that with that department who the bad guys were at this time I guess by the grace of God my memory has fogged up enough so that I don't know anyone who I would now say operated out of the terrible motivation. I can't discover what that motivation would be I am sending the documents along they are in roughly in chronological order and if they're helpful to you find you may have these already or may find them in

somebody's archives and I have a big old scrapbook that I had a man and that accounts for the kind of poor quality of of the reproduction of them but maybe they'll be helpful to you as I come now to the end of the questions there.

I remember now a couple of other things that may be relevant and helpful. I remember one other person that that was instrumental in doing some recruiting and at least feeding me information and that was Paul Vigness and he of course came from very, very conservative point of view Dr. Solberg. Chris Solberg also was someone that as he was advisor to the student body and and he tended to – if not overtly at least kind of by implication and and stuff – encourage us in in the kind of direction and support that we were offering to to set. One other little kind of incident that I think at least I always recall was some kind of sense of humor and that I thought was interesting thing when I wrote the letter which you will see to Dr. Foss the executive committee of the Board of Regents called me in and what they called me in for was to to put the question to me about what right did I think I had to address myself to to the Board of Regents in this whole matter. I recall in my usual kind of smart alec way that I mentioned to them that that whatever the issue was whether I was right or wrong on the issue was not really terribly important but the fact that I was a member of the North Pacific District of the American Lutheran Church and that that District was in fact the owners of PLU and therefore I had a right to address myself to them as a member of that constituency and I remember O.K. Davidson particularly nodding his head and saying at that point I was right. I don't remember that they said I was right at any other point but at least they did have me and I think probably – and this is real foggy and in my memory – but I think part of the reason they had me in was to see if anybody had been doing any kind of you know any kind of tempted influencing me or anything else.

16:32 - 20:59 Eastvold after PLU

The last thing I'll mention and I think is probably the saddest if not the most tragic commentary on the situation with Dr. Eastvold. When I went off to seminary and Seth went off to CLC I can recall that that shortly after I got to the seminary he wrote me a brief letter just to kind of a personal letter and it was really kind of a plea to keep in some touch with him and I just kind of thought at the time that it's real tragic that if you know his realm or circle of friends have been reduced so that he's desperate enough to continue or to elicit some kind of try to elicit some kind of relationship from a former student. That's kind of interesting and then on the announcement that was made when he became acting president down at CLC he wrote he just took that announcement the mimeographed announcement and flipped it over and on the backside of it wrote me a personal letter which unfortunately in looking through this stuff I was unable to find or I would send it to you and again I was struck and at that time and have been it's stuck in my memory ever since then about how again tragic it was that that this man was so desperately lonesome that on occasion that should have brought more kind of joy and affirmation than that he takes the time to you know to write to someone like like myself.

It was also interesting I suppose and this just is a little kind of highlight of course when he had his fatal stroke here in Minneapolis which occurred I guess in the coffee shop at the Curtis Hotel and they took him over to the old Hennepin County General Hospital. On a couple of occasions my wife and I went down to visit him and then of course when they had his memorial service at Central Lutheran why we and we were there and greeted Mrs. Eastfold and all of that kind of thing so anyway that maybe gives you some sense about my personal

involvement and reaction and response to the whole thing. It was a great year for me in terms of learning some of which took years to process.

Also during this whole period of time we weren't just consumed with what was going on in terms of happening to Seth and all of that we went through a process to redo the student government organization and we even botched that up. We went had Bob Zimmerman go through a whole process of rewriting the constitution and all of that and the only thing that we forgot to do was that we forgot to look at the old constitution so that we did not follow exactly the prescribed procedures for changing that constitution and so they got a petition up with 200 signatures on it and made us invalidate the election and then we had to go through the proper procedures which simply had something to do with the publication of the announcement of the election and all of that kind of thing.

Well I hope that's helpful to you I was glad to hear that that both Parkland and Renton were making it without me. One learns once again one's dispensability and we hope your garden continues to grow and and I really am excited and was pleased to see the announcement in the Scene about your choice to your being the choice to write this. And I'm anxious to to see how that all sorts out because I would be very interested in knowing what people now think about that who and who were on the other side of the whole issue so blessings to you and to your work and and to the university. Please write or give me a call if there are if there's any other information that I can give to you