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We have a very special gift for you which is quite symbolic!

More than wishful thinking or a pitch to prospective students and donors, our mission statement is the COMPASS that guides our decisions, safeguards us from giving in to cultural pressures, and keeps us on course. Each one of us looks at our mission often and works hard at mission clarity because we have seen the results in other institutions of higher education that have drifted from their original course.

Some of our country's most renowned universities were founded by deeply religious people and today are centers of secularism. Within six years of landing on American shores, the Puritans founded the first university for the purpose of training young men for the ministry and for political leadership.

Their motto was "Truth for Christ and Church." Today it is simply "Veritas," or "truth"—quite a difference. Truth is no longer undergirded by Christ or meant to serve His Church. Religion is still a course of study at Harvard, but her students are no longer challenged to go out and reach the world for Christ. Gone are the days when Harvard called on each student to "well consider that the main end of his life and studies is to know God and Jesus Christ."

Harvard and others like them did not drift overnight. It happened in small and subtle ways that went unchecked until the shift became significant. That is why we must continually check our course according to true north. In our colleges our true north is found at the very center of our mission statement. Unlike magnetic north, which shifts with interfering forces, true north is fixed and reliable. The Bible, as the psalmist writes in Psalm 119:89: "...**is firmly fixed in the heavens.**"

When it comes to truth and authority, our culture believes that truth is, at best, unknowable and that authority resides with the individual. Truth has become subject to the opinion of the individual.

We are at one of the most crucial turning points in human history. The five generations now living have witnessed a complete explosion of information, the collapse of distance (globalization), and the rising and falling of countries and alliances. Cultures and societies have been radically transformed and expansive wealth has brought great material comfort even as the most basic structures of society are undermined. Families are fractured, lawlessness abounds, violence invades our communities, and media brings a constant stream of chaos into our lives. Truth has become relative in a society that believes our most basic problems are rooted in a lack of self-esteem. Lacking objective truths and shared beliefs, our culture is crumbling under a mentality that exalts individual and group rights above all else.

As the 1970s hit says, "...just a ball of confusion—that's what the world is today!" Only God's authoritative Word offers an accurate perspective on who we are, where we come from, why we exist, what went wrong, the source of evil and suffering, and how the world can be set right again. It is our true north, "**Forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens.**"

Our gift is a small way of encouraging you to stay fixed on our true north, which is fixed and reliable . . . the Word of God.