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Bicentennial Lecture Series

John B. Hulst

Dordt College

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Bicentennial Lecture Series

A quick glance at the special events calendar for 1975-1976 indicates that there are many ways in which the Dordt College community will be observing the Bicentennial of the United States. The theme of the College Retreat is "You and Your Nation"; the Dordt College Thaliens will present an early American play, "The Contrast", by Royall Tyler; and a team-taught course, "America in the 18th Century", is being offered the first semester. Many members of the faculty and student body will, of course, also participate in community observances.

In addition to the above, the Special Events Committee has arranged for a Bicentennial Lecture Series, which will give consideration to American Civil Religion. The series will begin in September when Rockne McCarthy, Assistant Professor of History at Trinity College, Palos Heights, Illinois, will present lectures dealing with the historical roots of civil religion in America. In November, Richard Pierard, Professor of History at Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana, will address faculty and students concerning the emergence and

historical development of American civil religion. Finally, James Skillen, recently appointed to the Political Science Department at Gordon College, Wenham, Massachusetts and Rex Downey, a Christian attorney from Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania will appear jointly to consider with us the Christian alternative to present day civil religion.

This lecture series is not being presented simply so that a group of faculty and students may engage the experts in abstract discussion and debate. Rather, there is the conviction on Dordt's campus that Christianity has little or nothing in common with the American civil religion and that civil religion leads to injustice and oppression. At the same time, there is the growing realization that this conviction carries with it the responsibility to discover and articulate a Christian alternative which will establish true justice, granting all citizens freedom under law. It is hoped that Dordt's observance of the Bicentennial will be a significant step in that direction.

by J. B. Hulst