

THE CHURCH COLLEGE IN A CHANGING CULTURE *

I am not unmindful of the high honor bestowed upon me when asked to read a paper before this distinguished group of men in the Church of the Nazarene. Certainly I am unworthy of it. In the presence of such tall timber, of necessity I am but a sapling!

Some time ago I was the speaker in a conference of ministers and laymen. A second speaker was to follow me on the afternoon program. It was appropriate to make a break between the two messages. The song leader suggested we stand and sing after I had completed my message. Upon opening the hymnal to the number chosen, I found it was titled, "When The Storm Has Passed." That may be the way you will feel when I have completed my assignment.

For the past four years it has been my privilege, as executive secretary of the Department of Education, to visit each one of our six liberal arts colleges in the United States and our Bible College in Canada. I have had the opportunity of talking with administrators, faculty members, students and parents. Against that background, I would like to make a few observations in relation to the importance of our church colleges as they pursue their task in our turbulent world. Despite the insinuations of certain liberal educators who would have us believe that the Church has been antagonistic toward education and the free inquiry of the human mind, quite the contrary is true. For nine out of the first eleven colleges or universities that were founded in America were inspired and fostered by the Church.

The President's Commission on Higher Education reported there were 1,700 institutions of higher learning including certain professional schools, teachers' colleges and junior colleges. Less than one-third of these institutions were controlled by state or local governmental agencies. Six hundred ninety-two were church-related.

Even with the rapid growth of state universities during the past half century, we must not be led to think that higher education is the function of the state alone, nor that church colleges can be written off as having their day and no longer needed.

Likewise, we must not cast our eyes askance at the small church college. D. Elton Trueblood, in the September, 1956, issue of The Reader's Digest, wrote an article entitled, "Why I Choose A Small College." He states:

"I chose a small college because I wanted to be part of a life where this character-developing influence is pervasive; where it is shared by all the students and promoted not only by professors of Bible and religion, but quite as much by men in chemistry, biology and psychology."

* A paper read by S. T. Ludwig, executive secretary of the Department of Education, at the monthly meeting of The Breakfast Club, Kansas City, Missouri, March 7, 1957.

He continues:

"It is this concern of the small college for the individual which led me, ten years ago, to decide to leave the security and prestige of a great university and spend the rest of my life in a smaller school."

Milburn P. Akers, executive editor, Chicago Sun-Times, said recently in an address concerning the church college:

"It propogates a sense of responsibility for the use of what men know and thus generates a moral core in American culture."

That we are in a changing world is self-evident, even to the most casual observer. The next twenty-five years in the United States will be years of tremendous expansion --- we might almost say "years of explosion." Energy comparable to that which has been released within the atom seems to be working within our society as a whole. The worker today produces six times as much as his great-grandfather one hundred years ago. If present trends continue, the worker of one hundred years hence will be able to produce in one seven-hour day, what one now produces in a week.

Looking back upon the post-war decade, we must realize that a revolution has occurred within our social order. Although the use of peacetime atomic energy and the processes known as automation are yet in their infancy, America has increased her total output by some 42% --- from \$290,000,000,000 annually to well over \$400,000,000,000. At the same time, our labor force has increased by 17%. All of this has been going on while work hours have been shortened; leisure at both ends of the life cycle has been augmented; and the years of life expectancy have been lengthened.

In the September, 1955, issue of the pertinent magazine, CHANGING TIMES, a good many pages were devoted to the theme, "What Changes May We Expect In America In The Next Ten Years." The list is too long and even "shocking" to review all of them here, but let me mention a few. New homes will be built at the rate of 1,200,000 each year for the first five years and after that, the rate will increase to 1,400,000 each year; 81,000,000 cars and trucks will be on the road instead of the present 51,000,000; 7,000 churches will be built or remodeled each year for the next ten years; atomic power will do much of the work now performed by other kinds of fuel and it will do a lot of other things besides such as preserve food, purify medicines, rid farmers of insects, diagnose disease and effect cures; the turbocar will be sold within ten years and probably five, possessing only one-fifth the moving parts of present cars and without transmission or clutch, and will run on oil or kerosene; another printing revolution is on and soon electronic printing will take over. Words can now be sent through space at the speed of light and at the rate of 1,000,000 words per minute. We are within hours, according to one authority, of launching a man-made satellite that will thrust into outer space to a height of 200 to 300 miles, then a third motor will take over at such speed that the device will start its own orbit around the earth,

overcoming temporarily the force of the earth's gravity. We are told that it may encircle the earth four or five times at a rate of approximately 15,000 miles per hour before it finally falls toward the earth and disintegrates. I repeat, we are living in a world that is rapidly changing.

Dr. August Heckscher, director of the Twentieth Century Fund of New York City, indicates three areas where this change is clearly marked: (1) The urbanization of our culture; (2) The submergence of the individual in the group; (3) The growing abundance of leisure time.

Taking for granted the rapid change of the social order and its consequent effect upon American life, it is crystal clear that Christian higher education as fostered by the Church of the Nazarene, has a purposeful destiny. Not only are we to prepare young people, both lay and ministerial, for Christian leadership in our communion, but we must share in the responsibility to help preserve the democratic freedoms upon which this nation was founded.

May I then direct your attention to three fundamental functions of the church college as it bears upon the changing culture of which we are a part.

In the first place, NAZARENE COLLEGES MUST TAKE THE BEST OF THE CULTURE THAT IS PAST AND UNITE IT WITH THE CULTURE OF THE PRESENT. Educators have been saying that for many years until the statement seems self-evident. Nevertheless, amid the fads and frills of modern education and against the background of changing social customs and ideals, there are those who wonder if the past has anything to say to the present. There are people in our generation who would be willing to start "brand new" if that were possible, and forget the message of history. But such an attitude would be tragic.

The past does have something vital to say to the present and if we look at that past with unbiased minds, we must be impressed that Christianity has played a vital part in it. As the noted historian, Toynbee, would remind us:

"Religion is the conserver, not only of its own faith, but also of the great achievements and values of human culture. ...In the midst of a general educational system, intoxicated with the elixir of novelty and reveling in unlicensed and often, unconsidered experimentation."

Because the faculties of our educational institutions are composed of men and women who are followers of Him who said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life," our church colleges are in a better position to look at the past, interpret the meaning of that past in terms of the Christian perspective and transmit the best of that culture to those who now drink at the fountain of learning.

But our colleges must do more than burn incense to the past. In the second place, THEY MUST FACE THE CULTURE OF TODAY AND INFUSE IT WITH A NEW DYNAMIC.

Arnold Nash, author of the penetrating book entitled, "The University of the Modern World," gives this quotation from the Archbishop of Canterbury:

"We have supposed that it is possible to provide an education which is religiously neutral to which religion can then added in greater or lesser measure. But, in fact, an education which is not religious is atheistic; there is no middle way. If you give to children an account of the world from which God is left out, you are teaching them to understand the world without reference to God. If He is then introduced, He is an excrescence. He becomes an appendix to His own creation."

Some time ago, I heard Dr. Caldwell, who was then president of the University of Chicago, give an address at an educational conference. He said in part:

"The great need of our society today is religious faith. Religious faith is the seed bed of moral conviction and commitment. Without moral order there can be no enduring social or political institution."

"If the church related college is to reverse the drift away from the religious aim of education, it must put religion effectively into the curriculum. Nothing less than this will do the work."

"Student pastors, college chapels, religious emphasis weeks all have their value, but no extra-curricular program will ever convince faculty or students that the institution itself actually regards religion as important."

Dr. Caldwell then went on to say:

"The appropriate place for religion in the curriculum of the college or university is in the program of general or liberal education."

It seems to me we face a danger growing out of our desire to serve the Church effectively (but I trust not exclusively), namely, the training of ministerial students and full time Christian workers. To be sure, training these workers has dominated a large part of our training process and will continue to do so. But could it be possible that in the doing of this major task we tend to relegate the teaching of religion to the Departments of Religion on our campuses? We may have unconsciously left the impression that other departments of the college are secular and can take care of the program required by the liberal arts. Unless I am mistaken, I have sensed at times a sort of superiority complex on the part of some students in religion which made them act as if they along were the pervayers of Christian teaching on the campus and everybody else "must take note."

If the colleges of the Church of the Nazarene are to make an impact on the present day culture, we must do vastly more than train minis-

ters and missionaries. We must see to it that thousands of laymen shall be given the opportunity for Christian training. We must see to it that every department of the college maintains the Christian perspective.

In his recent volume, NOTES TOWARD THE DEFINITION OF CULTURE, T. S. Eliot points out that the culture of the Western world is rooted in the Christian faith. It is true that many leaders of our Western culture do not recognize this, but that does not change the fact. He goes on to say that it is possible for a culture to survive for a brief period after its faith has been lost, but it is his claim that vital religious faith has supported every high culture in human history.

If we are to infuse our present culture with a new dynamic, Christian education, as taught and expressed in our colleges, must counteract the disintegrating forces of modern life. The Copernican revolution which relaid the center of our solar system from the earth to the sun, has often been hailed as the great achievement of modern science. Perhaps its importance has been overestimated. What actually happened was that man, instead of God, became the center around which life revolved. The heart of this feverish period of emancipation may well be expressed by the words of Pope when he said, "Presume not God to scan. The proper study of mankind is man."

No one would deny that in this process there have been great human values liberated but as President Lugt of Central College, Pella, Iowa, points out, "There is in this process, however, a negative thrust that destroys the very life it seeks to liberalize." I think it is clear to all that emancipation of mind can be dangerous unless it is matched by an equal emancipation of the spirit. The centrifical forces of disintegration in our culture can be matched by greater centripetal forces of integration. It is just here that the power of the Christian college comes to the fore.

I remember standing on the seashore a few years ago at Hampton Roads, Virginia. It was my first view of the restless Atlantic. I watched the tide go out, leaving the beach naked and bare, save for a few bits of driftwood and frequent, but isolated, pools of water. The sight was not particularly inviting. For the most part, the pools of water were small, irregular, muddy, isolated --- a sort of disintegrating spectacle. But I tarried long enough to watch the incoming tide and before I realized it, one by one, those ugly separated pools of water were engulfed by the intrushing flow. In fact, the very beach itself gave way to the greater demands of the sea --- all became a part of the mighty ocean. Integration had taken place.

So it is with the human spirit. Men's minds, caught in swirling eddies and frustrated by cross-currents of shallow thinking, lose their sense of "belongingness" and become isolated units with no chart to guide, no compass to direct. But it is the Christian faith that changes that pattern. It is the function of the church college in our changing society to so present Christ and teach the principles of His culture in every phase of the curriculum, until the incoming power of His spirit can engulf lives and make them a part of God's great program.

The late William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, in his trenchant book entitled, THE CHURCH LOOKS FORWARD, makes this arresting statement:

"Our hope is in an advance to a more faithful Christian discipleship than has yet been seen on any large scale. At least, the Christian religion offers a principle of integration. It is the plain duty of Christians to live by it themselves, to think out its meaning for our modern world and to commend it to others as the one hope of deliverance from intolerable evils and the means of entering upon a glorious inheritance."

Dean Luther Weigle relates this story about his elder son who had just graduated from Yale. "Dick," he queried, "out of what course do you think you got the most these four years?"

To his surprise, the answer came: "Billy's T and B." He referred to the course on Tennyson and Browning, taught by Professor William Lyon Phelps. He asked his son, "Why?" After a meditative moment the reply came, "I suppose because it gave me more to tie to and to live by." "To tie to and to live by" --- that is what the church college must give to the youth of this generation and the next and the next.

Again the church college must not simply be content with the present --- IT MUST SET THE PATTERN FOR A RENEWED CULTURE IN THE FUTURE. I would be clear at this point. The generation tomorrow is not going to be changed vitally by marching masses of men to the brink of the river and baptizing them as did Charlemagne; nor will the culture pattern be changed effectively by commanding thousands of soldiers to accept Christ by means of the sword as did Constantine; nor will the world of tomorrow be materially changed by methods employed by modern prophets who seek to publicize their activities by mass demonstrations of Christian avowal under flood lights, swing music and gaudy baptismal fountains. The Christian faith is a matter of individual surrender and commitment. The masses of men will be changed only by the individuals who make up the mass. Let us not forget that! Nevertheless, it is incumbent upon the church college --- the Nazarene college --- to help establish a pattern for the future that will raise the level of life and make our society more nearly Christian.

I wonder sometimes if we are losing our sense of social vision in helping to shape the generation that will be in control of our world after we are gone. Has it ever occurred to you that in the early days of our church we were much more socially conscious of our mission than we are now. When I came into the Church of the Nazarene in 1912, street meetings, jail services, meetings among the aged --- were considered an opportunity, not simply to preach the gospel, but to help change the world. Back in those earlier days we had three or four rescue homes, an orphans home or two and at one time, thirteen colleges or Bible schools. Perhaps we were attacking too many problems at one time for our weak resources then, but now that we are larger and stronger, are we in danger of losing our social conscience?

I know there are those fatalists among us who say we cannot or should not bother about changing the world tomorrow. Referring again to Arnold Nash's book, I quote:

"Imperial Rome, seeking a fate which could justify its existence, seized upon Christianity, and under Constantine, sought to achieve the imperial theme of permanent peace by harnessing the force of the growing Christian church. However, it was in vain. Rome fell, but Christianity produced Augustine, to lay the spiritual and deep intellectual foundation of a culture that for nearly a thousand years shown brilliant in literature, painting, architecture and philosophy."

Do we believe today that men can so live as to affect generations yet unborn? Let us turn back the pages of history for a moment. The time: 1738. It was at Aldersgate Street in London where the heart of a young Anglican clergyman was "strangely warmed" by the spirit of God while listening to the reading of Luther's comments on faith. And from the Aldersgate Street meeting house a life was changed; a movement was born; the Kingdom of God was extended around the world! Yes, . . . John Wesley was misunderstood. His method was not suited to the formality of his time. England was reeling like a drunken man amid her own power, vice and sin. She was almost on the verge of collapse. Then, like some might giant shaking the empire, revivals broke out under the Wesleys. These fires leaped across the channel to Europe and invaded the new country, America. This message of "freedom from all sin," and "Holiness unto the Lord," had much to do in the early years when our beloved nation was being born. What was it? The story of a man who surrendered his will to God and was changed --- and thus empowered, he changed the life of a nation --- and a world.

Dr. Buttrick in his book entitled, CHRIST AND MAN'S DILEMMA, cries out against the secularization of education as we find it in America. Herein lies one of the most important functions of the church college. It is to lift the minds of men beyond the boundary of time. In this high position of advantage, students can then gain perspective to view the world in relation to that which is to come.

Dr. Norman Pittenger, in his book entitled THE HISTORIC FAITH IN A CHANGING WORLD, says:

"In a word, the culture of America today lacks depth. There is no adequate grasp of the seriousness of men's condition; there is no real acceptance of his abiding sinfulness; there is little of the sense that his contemporary disease, which would readily be granted, is the expression of his fundamental disease, which would be denied or minimized."

Does the gospel of Jesus Christ have anything to say to modern man rapidly flocking to one hundred sixty-eight major metropolitan centers in America, where 56% of our total population lives? Does the Church have anything to offer to individuals who are fast becoming

submerged in a group so that we are on our way to developing into a society that "belongs to things" instead of a society that "owns things?" Does the Christian message have relevance to men and women of our time who within the next ten years will probably be working a four-day week? If these questions are to be answered in the affirmative, then the church college --- our own Nazarene colleges --- must play an ever-increasing role in preparing young men and women to live in this changing order.

It is incumbent upon the church college that it help to deepen the culture of America. This depth must begin in the heart and mind of the individual; it must proceed in the classroom, on the campus, in the social hall and out into life. It must train individuals to be sensitive to the Divine calling in every area of life, as D. Elton Trueblood states in his book, THE COMMON VENTURES OF LIFE, "There must be a sense of mission in every vocation."

The Nazarene college must enlist those persons who teach because of a high sense of dedication. For certainly, this sensitivity can never be communicated unless first it is an absorbing passion within the soul of the teacher.

I look back over my own college days. I think of J. W. Stokes, N. W. Sanford, Flora Reed Coate, T.S. Greer, E. Wayne Stahl, H. H. Price and others. They stand out as "matterhorns" among men. Specialists in their particular field of study, but masters all of the art of Christian living. And to them I owe a great debt for they were able to communicate something beyond the textbook which has made its indelible imprint upon my life and molded it after the Christian pattern.

One hundred twenty years ago a young lawyer of Boston gave up his practice to become secretary of the first state Board of Education. Horace Mann said:

"In giving up law to enter education, henceforth, the next generation will be my client."

That is the perspective of the Christian college. That expresses the insight of the Christian teacher. All that we want to accomplish will not be finished today or tomorrow, or in the next decade, but if our foundation is right, we can stand on that platform without fear and proclaim eternal truths that will outlast time --- and that will be the redemptive agent in society.

Some years ago, Dr. Homrighausen of Princeton, wrote a very unique and challenging book under the title, LET THE CHURCH BE THE CHURCH. May I paraphrase that statement by saying, let the church college be the church college. To follow the secular trend in education so characteristic of our age without positive instruction in our Christian avowals, is to betray our heritage and to fail in our task.

If we are to give to the young people of the Church of the Nazarene their rightful opportunity, we must see to it that they get in Nazarene schools, colleges and the seminary the best educational proce-

dures and the most up-to-date methods for the effective maturation of the learning process; but this does not mean that we need to sacrifice faith and fervency nor avoid the uniqueness of our calling.

Summarizing briefly, the church college has a place in our changing culture. (1) It must seek to preserve the best of our heritage across the years and unite it with the culture of the present; (2) It must go one step further and change the culture of the present by the power of a new dynamic --- a dynamic that is born of a vital relationship with God through Christ; (3) It must yet go beyond and prepare leadership for a pattern culture that will be more nearly Christian in its outlook and more nearly Christlike in its performance.

In 1939 a few weeks before the continent of Europe was plunged into war's bloody bath, it was my privilege to stand within the magnificent cathedral of St. Paul's in London, the masterpiece of the great architect, Sir Christopher Wren. Scarcely had I entered its portals until my attention was called to Holman Hunt's original painting, The Light of the World. It was not the cost of the canvas or the dabs of paint upon it that challenged my attention. It seemed to me that the soul and genius of the artist had combined to portray in far more eloquent language than I could utter, the tender compassion of a seeking Saviour. The vision enthralled me. I slipped into the shadows to watch the varied crowd pass by.

At first, it was an old white haired man that caught my attention; then, a middle-aged woman; and last, an inspiring youth. They paused before the mellow light thrown across the painting, drew closer in rapt attention, and quietly moved on. Not infrequently did I see a hand lift to wipe a falling tear or lips move as if in silent prayer. It was a sight I shall never forget. Jesus, the light of the world, standing there, was moving the hearts of men.

Then I remembered. This man of Galilee went about doing good. He was unjustly brought to trial. He was scourged and beaten --- spat upon. Pricking thorns were pressed upon his brow. A purple robe in mock derision was given him. Then, up that lonely, ascending trail He bore His own cross. The dull thud of pounding nails against human flesh was heard. The uplifted cross with the Christ upon it was dropped in its prepared socket. The thief, the only fit being to associate with this king, so his enemies thought, cried out, "Remember me." When the man on the middle cross said, "It is finished," He remembered not only the thief, but all men everywhere gone astray.

That cross on Golgotha still stands. It means that by this man's suffering, you and I can be changed. That cross is a symbol of life, not death; of victory, not defeat; of timeless eternity, not life's end. Since that cross appeared, bombs have fallen upon our world in unmitigated fury. Shot and shell have poured across stretches of sea and waste land in endless barrage. Panzer divisions have been locked in mortal combat. Even today thrones are tottering; empires are falling; human economy is crumbling, but the cross still stands --- a symbol of a Saviour's love; an abiding witness to God's faith and His ability to change men. A promise that God shall build (and even now is doing so)

an enduring Kingdom that shall never end. It is this message of the Galilean that we, in Christian education, must interpret to modern man.

We who are here today, you and I, are called upon to make that Christ real in the hearts and lives of our students; to demonstrate by word of mouth and deed of life the changeless principles of the Prince of Peace. It can be done! It is being done on the campus of Nazarene colleges and at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Scholarship and faith are being welded together to form a new, stronger and better brotherhood --- a fellowship of men and women whose minds have been trained and whose hearts have been committed. This is our common task as we face the challenge of our changing culture.