CONTENTS

VOL. 4  AUTUMN 1965  No. 3

PAGE

1  Editorial

3  Reflections on Theological Education
   by Bernard M. Loomer

9  The Lost Dimension and the Age of Longing
   by Sidney E. Mead

14  Divinity School News

Center Pages

New Appointments, Loomer Goes

19  Man in Modern Literature
   by Nathan A. Scott, Jr.

23  "Theological Education in an Ecumenical Age"
   by Martin E. Marty

Co-Editors: Nancy E. Auer, Alan Miller

PHOTOGRAPHER: William Sloam

PHOTOGRAPHIC: LAYOUT: Tom M. Sherwood

© The University of Chicago (The Divinity School) 1965
Yet theological scholarship has never been the sole concern. There has been a deep interest in higher education and in the ministry of the Christian churches. One of the conferences will deal exclusively with the concern for and contribution of the Divinity School to higher education in America, its participants consisting of the thirty-five men and women alumni who are serving as presidents of institutions of higher education. This conference will also be built around the format of papers presented with the addition of panels to discuss basic educational issues. Theology’s stake in higher education in America ought not to be overlooked or ignored. The conference will provide a splendid opportunity for one theological institution to reflect upon its own concern as revealed through the activity and insights of its alumni.

The other special conference will deal with the problems and possibilities of the Christian ministry today. The Divinity School has contributed many outstanding leaders to the Protestant denominations in America. It has long been concerned with the preparation of a more intelligent, dedicated and relevant ministry. In fact, it is most appropriate that the conference on the ministry be held during the same academic year when the Divinity School launches out on its new professional doctoral program for ministry. At least one panel during this conference will be given over to the discussion of the nature, content, and implications of this new program.

These nine conferences should provide an adequate medium through which to express the contributions and concerns of the institution, reflecting the very best that is in the Divinity School at its present moment in history. By reflecting the best of its present, the past will be honored. One final thing that should come out of the conferences is the determination to prepare a history of the Divinity School. The Dean is requesting a special committee to work with him in planning this project. The Divinity School is the only major university theological institution that has not yet had its history prepared. To be sure, it is by far the youngest; this is thus somewhat understandable. Nevertheless, its contributions have been so wide-ranging and significant that the time has now come to rectify this lacuna in the history of theological education in America.

The first Centennial conference will be that of the History of Religions field, October 11-13. The planning of this conference so early in the academic year was, in part, dictated by the fact that the eleventh International Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions will be held September 6-11 in Claremont, California. Under the direction of Professors Eliade, Kitagawa, and Long an outstanding program has been prepared. Public lectures will be delivered by Professors Eliade and Paul Tillich. Reading papers will be Professor Philip H. Ashby, Ph.D., 1950, of Princeton University; Professor Charles J. Adams, Ph.D., 1955, of McGill University; Professor Thomas J. J. Altizer, Ph.D., 1955, of Emory University; Professor Cornelius Bolle, Ph.D., 1961, of Brown University; Professor Charles S. J. White, Ph.D., 1964, of the University of Wisconsin; and Professor H. Byron Earhart of Vanderbilt University. Each participant will direct his attention to the "Problem of Understanding" in the History of Religions. On the last day of the conference a memorial service will be held in Bond Chapel for Joachim Wach, Professor and Chairman of the History of Religions Field of the University of Chicago from 1946 to 1955.

Preparations are now under way for all of the remaining conferences; the next issue of Criterion will carry a complete schedule of all conferences. Also, the planning to achieve the goals suggested above will be shared with alumni as quickly as plans are complete. Meanwhile, it would be good to receive comments and insights from any of the alumni.

Dean Jerald C. Brauer
to know to what extent has been and is his influence in theological education in America and elsewhere.

Mr. Loomer is now being lured by a Siren of the West, Berkeley Baptist Divinity School and the very promising Graduate Theological Union in that area. Wherever he goes and whatever he does he will always be a meaningful part of us and always with us. He and his family will always be in our prayers, hopes, and aspirations. But I will not presume at this point on the reception to come later and simply affirm now in behalf of us all our very great pleasure in hearing so qualified a person speak to us on this subject, "Reflections on Theological Education." Professor Loomer!

SEVENTEEN YEARS ago this fall and from this same pulpit I read a paper on "The Aim of Divinity Education" (The Divinity School News, Feb. 1, 1949). I suspect that there is no basic discontinuity between that paper and the present one, although I hope there has been some enlargement of vision. Certainly some of the sentiments expressed then have deepened into fairly stable convictions. In any event I have shaped the present paper afresh.

The motto on the University’s seal reads, in its translation: "Let knowledge grow from more to more; and so be human life enriched." Insofar as the meaning of this motto refers to the hoped-for positive relation between the research dimension of the University and human fulfillment, my concern is only in part embraced by the text. For my theme includes not only the contribution of research to the satisfaction of man’s insatiable and unquenchable curiosity in the form of new and perhaps more adequate knowledge — a knowledge that enriches when valued for its own sake as well as for its potential practical and technological consequences. My theme also involves a passion for the civilized and humanizing aims of the processes of education.

To state my thesis in a preliminary way: surely the basic goal of education at any level, from kindergarten to our professional schools, must be to provide those conditions, human, intellectual, and technical, whereby we may become more fully and adequately human — that this should be our aim to the extent that formal education can be an efficacious means to this end. Since we obviously actualize our humanity through agencies and relations other than and in addition to the processes of formal education, education is but one instrument among several that are relevant for the achievement of this purpose. Yet however diverse the subject-matters, the methods, the competences, the intellectual and/or professional capacities and skills involved, surely we must be alert to maintain that the processes of genuine education have or should have human and not simply academic and technical consequences — that an educated person, in whatever work he is engaged, is or should be somehow a more civilized, a finer, a more humane, a more adequate human being precisely because of his educational experience.

The evidence relevant to the critique of this correlation would be extremely difficult to obtain. The data would be ambiguous and complex, involving considerable temporal spread, and subject to all sorts of prejudiced judgments. Similar difficulties would obtain with respect to an analysis of the types of education involved. Yet despite the extremely problematic character of the evidence relevant to the assessment of the proposition, I would hold to the correlation at least as a normative statement. I would and do adversely evaluate contemporary educational theories, practices, and products in the light of this norm. To put the matter in minimal terms, the contrary contention, either in theory or practice, is a betrayal of our educational heritage in its Jewish, Christian, and Greek roots.

Education and research are the two grand functions of a university. Without venturesome, bold, and significant research a university is incomplete and remiss in the fulfillment of its obligation and reason for being. Without education in the genuine sense, including its humanistic vision and humanizing aim, a university is distorted and may become self-destructive and demonically dangerous to society. In terms of the driving forces shaping our contemporary practices, a concern for education, even in its deepest dimensions, appears to be an involvement of those who are often labelled second-class university citizens. At times education seems to be regarded as a necessary evil, possibly good in its way, but certainly a time-consuming, inconvenient, and unprofitable preliminary to the main business of research.

Education and research have their respective values. But in their being and their significance they do not exist simply alongside each other, each equally autonomous and self-sufficient. Research in the sense of man’s creativity, the bringing forth of something new, is close to the center of man’s basic nature. Yet my contention is, although I do not here defend it, that research is a dimension of education, that research needs to be grounded in the educational vision at all levels of academic life, and that this is the true order of being and the proper order of knowing.

Man is not a function of his knowledge, be his knowledge old or new. Neither is he to be defined finally in terms of his knowledge or his capacity for
subject for another paper. I can only reiterate my general conviction that the greater knowledge, love, freedom, trust, appreciation, sensitivity, and openness that ought to be actualized within the context of an educational experience should have existential implications for the ways in which we respond to our fellows and to the ultimate source of all goodness and being. Unless this is the case in some fundamental sense, or unless we agree that such should be the aim of our work as educators, then a radical doubt should be entertained concerning our justification for being. "The Sabbath was made for man."

The reflections that follow are all too brief and undeveloped. But limitations of time do not permit of a more complete and elaborate analysis.

III

All degrees are awarded on the basis of an achieved maturity. In most respects there are reasonably adequate criteria for measuring and assessing maturity. Before indicating a few of these criteria with respect to the maturity of our love, I want to take this opportunity to make two parenthetical remarks.

First, it is high time that we in theological education stop characterizing our degrees in terms of numbers of years. Perhaps no degree, and certainly no degree beyond undergraduate work, should be specified in terms of years of study. In like manner, and beyond a certain point, courses should not be specified. A degree represents a level of maturity, and a student should be awarded the degree when he has attained the required maturity. The pace of life, learning, and love is different for each student. Each can achieve his maturity only in his due season. He should leave when he is "ready" to leave, not before or after.

And, while I'm at it, one other point. University divinity schools have prided themselves on the numerous advantages that accrue to them by virtue of being situated within the context of universities, in contrast to the disadvantages that inhere in isolated denominational seminaries. But I know of no B.D. degree in any university divinity school that has required its students to take work in other university faculties. If this judgment is more rather than less correct, the distinctiveness of university divinity schools, at least at this point, is certainly weakened. Certain students may avail themselves of the opportunity afforded them, but the degree as such has no such stipulation. I regard this as a fairly serious matter. It remains to be seen whether degree programs for the professional doctorate correct this deficiency. The worldliness of the church might well include if not begin with the worldliness of the education of its professional ministers.

Love has many forms and many objects. One of the educational criteria of maturity in love is the capacity for intellectual love. This is a love for intellectual things, for things of the mind. The things of the mind are ideas, meanings, values, appreciations, interpretations, and understandings. Ours is a world of meaning. Intellectual love is a passion, a concern, a movement of the self toward ideas and meanings — a movement for the sake of ideas and meanings and our relation to them, even though this outreach and concern contribute to our own human fulfillment. In this case the reference is to theological ideas and meanings.

If we do not love we cannot live. If we do not have a passion and concern for ideas and meanings for their own sake, then we are not as fully human as we ought to be. We fail in love. Our stature is measured by the range and depth of our love, even our intellectual love.

Contrary to what many practical-minded people think, I suggest that we cannot truly love people if we are totally indifferent to the world they live in, including their world of ideas and meanings. You cannot love God and hate your fellow men. (Parenthetically, I am not sure that you can truly love your fellow men and hate God.) You cannot love people and hate the world, including the world of meanings and values. In one sense ideas and meanings are simply aspects of persons, and in this sense they are abstractions when considered by themselves. But people live in a world of meanings, for we are creatures of meanings as well as creators of meanings. In this sense people considered apart from their world of meanings are abstractions. In this respect you cannot adequately love people by themselves. Surely this is one implication of what is meant by historical understanding.

Love which desires a relationship with the other respects the other. The lover must behave in accordance with the nature of the other, be it a person or a rock or a god. The other cannot be dealt with in any manner that happens to suit our mood or fancy, in terms of our whims, prejudices, misconceptions, and ignorance. All love has its discipline. The aim of discipline is to enable love to deal justly and truly with the other. Discipline exists for the sake of love.

Intellectual love has its discipline. And the discipline of intellectual love is truth. Intellectual love is a passion for truth. Ideas and meanings, as well as facts, cannot be mishandled or distorted or manipulated to suit our personal biases and our small souls. Ideas and meanings have their own
courses of thought and action, and most especially in being put in positions of responsibility with their attendant strains and pressures. For this reason students must achieve some specialized competence, for the choice of specialization and the achievement of the requisite competence are not only intellectual and academic decisions and accomplishments. They proclaim and shape our personal identity. They testify as to who we are.

For the same reason responsible participation in professional activities is a necessary part of the realization of the student’s identity. In the same sense I become more convinced that all graduate programs should require the student’s achievement of the relation of equality between himself and one or more members of the faculty. Equality is realized when the student takes an accountable responsibility for the questions he asks. All B.D. programs have failed at this point. And no program can be called doctoral in character if this criterion of maturity in love is absent.

And through all this the student must come to stand some place, theologically. His stance must be his own, however much he has assimilated from others. He must have appropriated it to a sufficient degree to have made it his own, at least in a developing way. He must run the risk of all the basic questions and doubts and uncertainties. He must take the risk of losing his faith and his identity. Without this stance he has no message or style of being.

IV

Whether or not faculty require students, and I believe they do, students require faculty. For we are enabled to love, intellectually and otherwise, with the help of those who already love. This resource lies in the community of love, in this instance in the community of teachers and scholars who in their love are passionate, disciplined, and free.

The teacher is one who loves his subject matter, and the communication of it, for its own sake, and who loves the student for his sake, and who is concerned about the complex relationship between the student, the subject matter, and himself. And in all this he attempts to be aware of the structure and dynamics of the student. In this context both the student and the teacher are born and recreated. There is a mutuality of giving and receiving whereby the teacher as well as the student acquires the courage and strength to be himself. The gifts of grace come through each other.

The scholar has his specialized knowledge and makes his intellectual contribution through his writing and lecturing and discussions. This is a great good. It is absolutely essential. It is a necessary condition. But I have long since been convinced that it is not sufficient.

Faculty cannot ask of students what they do not require of themselves. Integrity and self-identity and maturity of love are equally applicable requirements for faculty. We are members one of another. For these and related reasons faculty should also be committed to the life of dialogue. This is recognized in many quarters but I think not at sufficient depth of understanding.

For the life of communal dialogue is a far-reaching and deeply probing set of relations. Not only our intellectual strengths and inadequacies are laid bare, but our psychic disorders, our emotional blocks, our resentments, and our foolish hatreds are revealed. Our intellectual failures are finally human failures. Freedom is a characteristic of the self and not of the intellect alone. Free and open and creative minds require free and open and creative selves. This kind of life, both intellectual and human, is possible only if the community of dialogue is a community of the grace of judgment and forgiveness. And this possibility requires the dedication of leadership, in the absence of which there is little dialogue, little love, and little life. For there is no substitute for embodiment. The soul of an institution must be embodied in the life and personnel of its faculty and administration. Without embodied leadership the faculty, like all people, perish. With it creative life is possible.

“Love is patient; love is kind and envies no one. Love is never boastful, nor conceited, nor rude; never selfish, not quick to take offence. Love keeps no score of wrongs; does not gloat over other men’s sins, but delights in the truth. There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, its hope, and its endurance.” (1 Cor. 13:4-7)
the efforts of man himself. . . Hunger and starvation will then be unknown . . . Governments will be conducted with the quietude and regularity of club committees. The interest which is now felt in politics will be transferred to science. . . . Poetry and the fine arts will take that place in the heart which religion now holds. . . . Not only will Man subdue the forces of evil that are without; he will also subdue those that are within. . . . A time will come when Science will transform [men's bodies] . . . Disease will be extirpated; the causes of decay will be removed; immortality will be invented. . . . [and] Man then will be perfect; . . . he will therefore be what the vulgar worship as a god.

That, also, was a beautiful faith—a faith by which thousands of enlightened people lived and did great deeds, creating an era when even "wise men hoped" and believed in progress.

But it must sadly be said—that god, incarnate in mankind and consequently immortal only as posterity is immortal—that god also died—in 1945 when a pigmy bomb left a mushroom-shaped cloud over a Japanese city. What men like Winwood Reade hailed as the god who would transform men's lives and institutions and invent immortality for all, had shown another face. The potential producer of all good was now seen as the potential producer of universal death—by flame and radiation, or slow starvation because of overpopulation, or sheer pollution of the earth's surface. Man may go out with a big bang, or perhaps he will merely whimper as he suffocates in his own garbage. The Psalmist might say, "God gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul," or "he gave them what they asked, but sent a wasting disease" among them.

Slowly it seems to be dawning upon those people who placed their faith and found meaning for their lives in progress through posterity that there may be no "everafters" for mankind to live happily in. There may be no future. Posterity, worshiped as a god, may be even more vulnerable than the old Christian God because we can kill him as easily as we can "overkill" mankind.

There are, then, two aspects of the "lost dimension"—the loss of the ability to believe in the traditional Christian sense, and the loss of ability to assure ourselves that a posterity is a sure thing. For many people god the latter is just as dead as god the former.

It is because the faith in man's future which the eighteenth century taught us to substitute for faith in the Christian God has also collapsed that this becomes The Age of Longing—the title of Arthur Koestler's novel of 1951.

Longing for what?

Longing for faith, for belief, for a meaning to one's life, and the work one does, for the ability to see something more than a "tale told by an idiot, signifying nothing" in the daily chores one has to do in order to live.

Of course this does not strike everyone at the same time or in the same way. Remember my friend who lives, and lives well, in the old Christian world. And I, as you, know technical intellectuals who still live, apparently quite happily, in the world of Winwood Reade. Others seem to be gifted with the capacity to earn enough in our affluent society to keep up with all the Joneses, all without any apparent concern about the family gods. Of course sometimes we eventually learn that as they gravitated toward the couch, or into an expensive slumber room, they had been living lives of "quiet desperation"—as Henry David Thoreau thought was the fate of most of his friends in staid old Concord.

The people of Koestler's novel are these "dispossessed of faith; the physically or spiritually homeless." The burden of their anguish is, "LET ME BELIEVE IN SOMETHING."

What I have given is the description of a mood—not universal of course, but widely prevalent among sensitive people. These people cannot give themselves either to faith in the traditional sense, or to the rich spontaneous faith in man and progress. Therefore it is not to be supposed, as some preachers seem to suppose today, that ridiculing and undermining the belief in man will restore the old kind of faith in God. But, on the other hand, neither can it be supposed—as other preachers appear to do—that undermining faith in the Christian God where it still exists, and ridiculing traditional Christian beliefs and practices will restore the lost faith in man's future. A plague on both these houses!

The people I have in mind seek religious faith—whether they would call it that or not does not matter. Their mood, to repeat, is akin to that of Emerson's soldier after the battle who realizes that the life he had to take cannot ever be recalled—that an enemy once dead is no longer an enemy—that the space he, or it, occupied may now be a fearful vacuum. It is to these people that a church ought to speak—must speak if it is to be more than a congenial company of irrelevant people. What is to be said?

At this point, having tied the religious situation into a desperately complex and hard knot, I wish that like some hardy true-believers I could pronounce it "Gordian" and cut it apart with one deft stroke of the "Sword of the Spirit," the Word of God. But already, it seems to me, too many preachers who do not even understand the question these people of the age of longing are asking,
Divinity School News

DEGREES CONFERRED, 1964-65

BACHELOR OF DIVINITY
BACKUS, DAVID PEDERSON
BLACK, CLYDE ALEXANDER
A.B., Michigan State University
S.M., Michigan State University
BROWN, WILLIAM CLYDE
A.B., Stanford University
GILPATRICK, JEAN WITMAN
A.B., Connecticut College
HARRIMAN, JAY DALLAS
A.B., West Virginia University
JAYS, ROBERT W.
A.B., Albion College
LEONARD, PAUL ROGER, JR.
A.B., Davidson College
WALKER, JERRY CARTER
A.B., Oklahoma City University

MASTER OF ARTS
BECKMAN, PETER T., JR.
A.B., Augustana College
D.B., Augustana Theological Seminary
BOYVEY, MARY McCULLAY
A.B., Occidental College
BRENNEMAN, WALTER LUTHER, JR.
A.B., Gettysburg College
BRUNE, AUDREY HOPE
A.B., New York University
A.M., State University of Iowa
BUSCHMANN, WALTER MILTON
A.B., Brown University
D.B., Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary
CHRISTIANSON, CLIFFORD GERALD
A.B., Gustavus Adolphus College
D.B., Augustana Theological Seminary
CLOTHEY, FREDERICK WILSON
A.B., Aurora College
Th.B., Aurora College
D.B., Evangelical Theological Seminary
DEAN, WILLIAM DENARD
A.B., Carleton College
DIVINE, JOHN WESLEY, JR.
A.B., Phillips University
D.B., Phillips University
ELLWOOD, ROBERT SCOTT, JR.
A.B., University of Colorado
S.T.B., Berkeley Divinity School
FISH, JOHN HALL
A.B., Princeton University
D.B., Union Theological Seminary
GUNN, JANET VARNER
A.B., Gettysburg College
D.B., University of Chicago
HARDY, HENRY ORLANDERS
S.B., University of Illinois
D.B., University of Chicago
HOLLERORTH, HUGO JOHN
S.B., Northwestern University
D.B., University of Chicago
LANSING, JOHN WILLIAM
A.B., University of New Mexico
D.B., Southern Methodist University
LORD, CHARLES HARVEY
A.B., Phillips University
D.B., Union Theological Seminary
McDILL, THOMAS H.
A.B., Erskine College
D.B., Erskine Theological Seminary
D.B., Columbia Theological Seminary
MILLER, ALAN LEE
A.B., Rice University
MILLER, JEAN PADBERG
A.B., Drew University
MINOTT, FRANK D.
A.B., Indiana State Teachers College
NELSON, FRANCIS G.
A.B., University of Michigan
A.M., University of Michigan
D.B., University of Chicago
NELSON, GORDON LEE
A.B., University of Minnesota
D.B., Luther Theological Seminary
A.M., University of Minnesota
REIST, JOHN SETH, JR.
A.B., Houghton College
D.B., Northern Baptist Theological Seminary
ROBBINS, JAMES WESLEY
A.B., Olivet Nazarene College
RUBIN, CAROL FAY
A.B., College of the City of New York
D.B., Union Theological Seminary
SPENCER, JOHN BUNYAN
A.B., Franklin College
D.B., Colgate-Rochester Divinity School
STONE, JEROME ARTHUR
A.B., University of Chicago
D.B., Andover Newton Theological School
STRENG, ADOLPH CARL, JR.
A.B., Texas Lutheran College
D.B., Wartburg Theological Seminary
STUHR, WALTER MARTIN, JR.
A.B., Yale University
D.B., Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
TARBOX, EVERETT JACOB, JR.
A.B., Texas Technological College
D.B., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Th.D., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
WECKMAN, GEORGE A.
A.B., Muhlenberg College
D.B., Philadelphia Lutheran Seminary
WILDERDINK, GARET
A.B., Hope College

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
BROWNING, DON SPENCER
A.B., Central College
D.B., University of Chicago
A.M., University of Chicago
DONALD E. GOWAN (Ph.D. '64) has left the United Bible Chair at North Texas State University and, after spending the summer assisting with the excavation of Ashdod in the Near East, will assume the position of Assistant Professor of Old Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

PHILIP J. HEFNER (M.A. '61, Ph.D. '62) was awarded the Susan Colver Rosenberger Prize for constructive study and original research in the Divinity School. The prize consisted of a $500 cash award and was given on the basis of the best dissertation written by a Divinity School student during the past three years, as determined by a faculty committee appointed by Dean Jerald C. Brauer. Dr. Hefner received his B.A. degree from Midland College in 1954, and his B.D. degree from the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1959. He is now Professor of Systematic Theology at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. His dissertation was entitled “Theology and History: An Interpretation of Theology by Albrecht Ritschl.”

ALBERT LELAND JAMISON (Ph.D. '41), formerly Professor of Religion and chairman of the department, has become the Willard Ives Professor of the English Bible at Syracuse University.

E. THOMAS LAWSON (B.D. '38, M.A. '62, Ph.D. '63) has been appointed Chairman of the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Western Michigan University.

EUGENE A. LUENING (B.A. '40, B.D. '43, Meadville) has accepted a position on the staff of the Indiana Civil Rights Commission as a specialist in housing and community organization for Northern Indiana.

FLOYD EDWARD MCGUIRE, pastor for nearly 25 years of the Larchmont Avenue Presbyterian Church, Larchmont, New York, died suddenly on December 10, 1964.

ELMER G. MILLION (M.A. '49, Ph.D. '50), executive director of the Department of Schools and Colleges of the American Baptist Board of Education and Publication, in the autumn will join the faculty of Linfield College, McMinnville, Oregon, as dean of academic administration. He received his B.A. degree from Georgetown College in Kentucky, and has also studied at the University of Mexico and New York University.

CARL A. NISSEN (M.A. '29) has retired from his position as Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at Ohio State University. As of July 1, he was Associate Professor Emeritus.

FOURTEENTH ANNUAL

Roger Williams Fellowship Conference

The Divinity School, The University of Chicago, November 1-4, 1965

“CHRISTIAN ALTERNATIVES TO ABSURDITY AND DESPAIR”

Interested American Baptist ministers should write to: LLOYD W. PUTNAM, The Divinity School, The University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois 60637
Dr. Don S. Browning has joined the faculty of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago as Instructor in Religion and Personality as of September 1965. He was formerly Assistant Professor of Theology and Pastoral Care at the Graduate Seminary of Phillips University, Enid, Oklahoma.

Dr. Browning received his B.A. degree from Central College in Fayette, Missouri, in 1956, and in 1959 received the B.D. degree from the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. He continued his studies at the Divinity School in the field of Religion and Personality, receiving the M.A. degree (1962) and the Ph.D. degree (1964).

An ordained minister of the Christian Church, he has held several pastorates in Missouri. He was minister of students at the University Church of the Disciples of Christ in Chicago from 1957 to 1960, and part-time chaplain at the Illinois Children's Hospital School from 1961 to 1962. The following year he was a counselor at the William Healy School, a residential treatment center for emotionally disturbed children of Chicago.

The Divinity School
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

ALUMNI CENTENNIAL
FIELD CONFERENCE

HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

"The Problem of Understanding"
October 11-13

"The New Era of the History of Religions"
A Public Lecture by Professor Mircea Eliade

Swift Hall Commons
8:30 P.M.
Monday, October 11

Presentation and Discussion of Papers

Swift Hall Commons
Beginning at 9:00 A.M.
Tuesday, October 12

Breasted Hall of the Oriental Institute
8:30 P.M. Tuesday, October 12

"The Significance of the History of Religion for the Systematic Theologian"
A Public Lecture by Professor Paul Tillich

Memorial Service for Joachim Wach

Joseph Bond Chapel
11:30 A.M. Wednesday, October 13
prepared to voice similar claims. For the literature that is ours — the literature, that is, of the twentieth century and of the last thirty-five or fifty years of the nineteenth century — is a literature that has often been by way of becoming itself a kind of scripture. It is a literature distinguished not only by its radicalism in formal experimentation but also by the dauntless audacity of its researches into the nature of selfhood, into what it means to be fully human in the modern age. And thus one cannot but be struck by the absurdity of the judgment expressed many years ago by Ortega in his famous essay on The Dehumanization of Art, in which he declared that modern literature was progressively moving away from the "human." But this, as a basic thesis about the poetry and fiction and drama of the twentieth century, is surely indefensible: for it may well be that no other body of literature has been so extreme and so explicit in its concern with the human situation. When we put ourselves in mind of Kafka and Lawrence and Eliot and Stevens and Brecht and Gide, it does indeed seem that the modern writer has been taking "a swarm of spears into his breast" and has been fighting through all the issues of the age without any adventitious aids or supports at all. [And when you are dealing with Death in Venice and Ulysses and The Castle and the late poems of Yeats and The Sound and the Fury and The Walnut Trees of Altenburg, you are dealing with a literature that has deeply involved itself in all those questions with which it has traditionally been the office of religious faith to deal, the questions that the jargon of our time calls "existential." "Its purpose," as one commentator has remarked of this literature, "is to trouble and upset us, to make us doubt the value of those things which our parents, and all of respectable society, taught us we were to be most sure of. More than the secular literature of any other time ... modern literature reaches into our most private selves." And it manifests a most intense concern with the whole issue of what in the language of religion is called salvation.

The literature of the modern period is, in other words, a literature that asks us in the most explicit way to deal with doctrine, indeed with the hardest kind of doctrine — namely, that which has to do with the nature of ourselves. And, in its doctrine about the human story, the very radical kind of independence which this literature often exhibits vis-à-vis the established traditions of Christian belief might very well, I say, encourage the expectation that it would be confronted with some degree of animus by a theologian.

This is a collision which might, however, be imagined not only of the extreme autonomy that, morally and religiously, the modern writer has often laid claim to: but it might also be expected that the Christian critic’s response would be something very negative, since the vision of the human prospect most characteristic of modern literature is itself so sharply divergent from the traditional Christian perspectives. In such representative expressions of our period-style as Malcolm Lowry’s Under the Volcano, Camus’ The Stranger, Beckett’s Waiting for Godot, and John Hawke’s The Cannibal, the human image that is projected is something like those doomed ghosts in the pictures of the contemporary English painter Francis Bacon, who look out at the world heart-stricken and aghast: or it is like a face described by the English writer Alex Comfort: in his novel On This Side Nothing, there is a sentence which says: "I saw the same fear in her face that I should have felt if a stranger called at night, the world-wide twentieth-century fear which one sees wherever one knocks unexpectedly at any door."

Indeed, all those writers who are today rendering experience in the classic modern idioms are forging an image of the human creature as one ousted from the precincts of security and grace — as one who has no place of safety and whose being is therefore “porous ... like those cryptic human figures in modern sculpture that are full of holes or gaps.” The German philosopher Helmut Kuhn several years ago entitled his study of Existentialism Encounter With Nothingness, and it would be difficult to come by any other phrase that so concisely renders the spiritual drama that is enacted in much of the representative literature of our period. The protagonists in these records of modern sensibility are creatures “full of holes and gaps, faceless, riddled with doubts and negations, starkly finite” — and, in their porosity, they are at the point of being invaded by the surrounding Nothingness. Perhaps the ideogram most perfectly depicting the human presence which this literature portrays is the cypher.

This sense of man’s impoverishment and indigence that so deeply informs today a widely prevalent mood does not, of course, spring from any merely willful inclination toward Manichaean styles of imagination. It is rather doubtless in part

2 Lionel Trilling, “Commitment to the Modern,” Teachers College Record, Vol. 64, No. 5 (February, 1963), pp. 405-406.
standards of intelligibility derive from a world of electric lights and telephones and nuclear fission are not certain now as to how it is that we may continue any longer to speak of God and of Transcendence. Where is the “place,” to speak metaphorically—where is the “place” in which God may be said to be? This is increasingly the central question that is anxiously wrestled with by contemporary theology.

We have, all of us, so to speak, “fallen” into the profane, and the historian of religion Mircea Eliade suggests that “desacralization” is the category that most comprehensively describes the spiritual situation of modern man.* So our literature, if it is to be an authentically contemporary literature, will inevitably be secular, and the world which it describes will be a world in which God appears in some way to have disappeared. And not only will ours be a secular literature, but I would myself hope that it would be radically secular, since scepticism and negation and denial may, if they are profound enough, by reason of their very radicalism, begin to quicken sensibilities of another order that are now by way either of being put aside or of declining into atrophy. In the degree to which it deepens the sense of religious deprivation, a radically secular literature may, in other words, by a dialectical route bring us once again into proximity to the Presence that we had thought to be absent—and thus it may become itself a kind of witness to the Indestructible.

The late C. S. Lewis was on one occasion recalling the impact that George MacDonald’s *Phantastes* had upon him, when he first chanced to read it in his youth: he said, “It did nothing to my intellect nor (at that time) to my conscience. Their turn came far later and with the help of many other books and men... What it actually did to me was to convert, even to baptize... my imagination.” Now it may be something like this—namely, a baptism of the imagination—it may be something like this that is deeply needed by every genuinely modern man, whether he recognizes it or not and whatever may be the creeds to which he formally gives his suffrage. For to read the prayer with which the 90th Psalm begins—

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.
Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou are God.

—to read such language as this is for all of us to know, however we may stand in regard to the things of religion, that here is a kind of capacity for naked encounter with the Sacred which few of us any longer possess. And what I am proposing is that, toward the end of a new baptism for the modern imagination, a radically secular literature may have a profoundly fruitful religious function to perform. For, by the very resoluteness with which it may plunge us into the Dark, it may precipitate us out of our forgetfulness, so that, in a way, our deprivation of the Transcendent may itself bring us into fresh proximity to its Mystery.

And
They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)

And, now, may the Lord bless you and keep you:
May He make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you:
May He lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.
And the Blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you and remain with you always.

---

theological level, an expression of Christian life will develop which will be more nearly congruent with Christian norms. As far as educational work is concerned, a realism will pervade the academic endeavor and the human products of such education will be better equipped to face church and world.

These six strokes represent conventional wisdom concerning the status of theological education today. Certainly they have elements of truth which will stand up under systematic scrutiny. They will, however, serve only those who have a high threshold of boredom, a narrow door of imagination, and a small room for improvement. They represent what has already been tried and found wanting. They are based on the assumption that theological educators can take exactly what they now have and can improve their product or instruments in the light of minor changes introduced by ecumenism. They do not ask whether such an enterprise might imply the building of a slightly improved house on a condemned site. We shall find more promising the possibility that an ecumenical age might impose on churchmen the need to appraise “the site” or basis of theological education itself and to work on the basis of results of that appraisal.

Conventional wisdom about change in theological education today has often come under criticism. I shall cite some of the more obvious criticisms which have been or can be applied:

“Ecumenical theological education”—such a phrase loads the noun with adjectives that can represent ideological burdens. Educators prefer to be more economical, to be unburdened and freed from the constrictions of too many adjectives. In their view it is difficult enough to undertake theological education at all; every time an additional presupposition is added they find it harder to be effective.

Second, the conventional approach easily falls prey to the danger that the ecumenical norms which are to judge and guide education be based on ecumenical forms which are themselves fragile, hardly able to stand up to criticism themselves and thus hardly clear and strong enough to serve as a standard. Are the ecumenical spirit and movement proceeding well enough to be able to sustain hitchhikers?

Hoping that the ecumenical standard will improve theological education may be a false dream: it is so attractive and so compelling that churchmen and educators may be tempted to think that it might cure the whole whereas it can only hope to cure a part of what is wrong with theological education. One can promote and realize ecumenical interaction in the academies and find that such interaction does little to improve the whole educational enterprise.

False hopes are distracting. The first task of educators is to educate, not to be agents for the ecumenical movement. Teaching is their vocation. Not all agencies of the churches must use all their powers at all times to serve but one of the churches’ many needs. Contemplatives fail in this vocation if they feel they must “go out” to be missionaries. Inner city workers are not called to represent the avant-garde of ecclesiastical architecture. And educators are not vocationally bound to be publicists for the ecumenical movement or stimulants of ecumenical fellowship for its own sake.

A fifth liability in the conventional approach: it may prevent educators from educating insofar as it calls them to obsession with what is impolitic or practically improbable. Most theological study centers are interlocked with universities, accrediting agencies, representatives of differing vocational expectations, and needs of different church boards or bodies. While all of these will be judged and could be upset by change in an ecumenical age, they hold powers which might prevent theological centers from existing at all if these are heedless of expectations and needs. Some of the powers, let us assume, are legitimate, as are the expectations and needs they represent.

The conventional portrait depicted above does not do justice to historic failures. Much of what it describes has been tried, found wanting, and has been abandoned. Some ecumenical experiment on these lines has given us little confidence for the future; should not educators learn from their history?

The dangers of dilettantism are apparent. In an ecumenical age it sometimes appears that half-hearted interest in ecumenism is the only sin and participation in Christian reunion is the encompassing virtue. On such a basis weak theological education can be lightly excused so long as it is well-mean and ecumenical.

Theological education which adapts programmatically to some of the needs of an ecumenical age may lose some of the virtues and values associated with pre- or sub-ecumenical and particular educational traditions. While theological educators must certainly risk for the sake of ecumenical fulfillment, they are not free to abandon the quest for quality in education in
theological educators’ own are interlocked and theological educators themselves are often unconsciously enslaved by the recent past. How did we come to occupy what may be a “condemned site,” especially since a historical view points in the longer past to more promising precedents?

“The recent past” is the shadow over those who begin with only a “view at mid-passage.” Our basic theological forms and institutions with few exceptions were established during the nineteenth century in America. Those people who came during that century or later quickly adapted to the forms established by those who had developed them out of their own earlier experiences with the American environment. Research into that era reveals countless ways in which the events or occasions which elicited and evoked creative new forms then have changed so radically that these forms should be called into question now. Christians today are actually closer to the problems, possibilities, and precedents of details of earlier centuries than they are to details which belong to the century immediately preceding our own. Ecumenical theologians remind us of this constantly; it is not likely that theological educators will make much progress in an ecumenical age if they take all their precedents from the immediate past and do all their minor adapting on the basis of inheritances from it.

Modern American formal theological education was born during the moment of greatest expansion and greatest division the Christian world has seen. Its institutions began to be established and to predestine later forms during the first decades of “The Great Century” of missionary, expansionist, and benevolent activity. Kenneth Scott Latourette (who gave the period this name) would probably have dated the period from 1792 (from William Carey) as the convenient date for the birth of modern missionary activity in Protestantism. For a century the Anglo-American capitalist economy expanded, using the new means of transportation and communication, and carrying with it (or leading or following) Christian missionaries representing competitive bodies or boards of Protestant and Catholic Christianity. The United States Constitution, several years earlier, had determined the legally pluralist character of a nation which did not feel its religious pluralism in its ethos for years to come. It did experience intense Protestant contention and division, but viewed from a distance these divided elements tend to look sufficiently homogeneous that we can speak of a Protestant host culture in which Catholics, Jews, and “unbelievers” in general were welcome or unwelcome guests.

The divided mission of the churches abroad and in the growing United States called for missionaries and ministers capable of reproducing in detail the separate theological charters for the separate missions. While many of the missionary groups, as is well known, did not place a high valuation on an educated ministry, still the pressures of the decades produced, even in these, numbers of seminaries or biblical institutes. They ordinarily bore a polemical relation to all other Christian groups. They were devoted to private denominational experiences, to stressing particular confessional histories, and to exaggerating differences with what sociologists call the “generalized other;” an abstract term for the more concrete “separated Christian brethren.”

In its original concept and realization, therefore, American theological education had no real chance to be ecumenical in the pattern of religious voluntaryism, competition, and divided mission. What is more, during these decades as the nations in the Atlantic civilization began to assert vigorous nationalist claims and to speak of their own manifest destinies, the teaching and literary traditions in these seminaries (including the Roman Catholic ones) tended to be un-catholic. Europe with its theological tradition and Christian experience represented, in the words of the poet, “dead kings and remembered sepulchres.” Roman Catholics kept alive an ideological ultramontanism and cosmopolitanism but they lacked an embracing positive view of the European Christian past or present. Orthodoxy was but marginally represented in America until late in the century. Protestants tended to write off most of Christian historical experience except for the first decade of life in the primitive church, a brief moment in the sixteenth century and their own particular forms of reformation, or the years and issues which gave birth to their separate denominational traditions which had chartered the separate seminaries. Ecumenism in space and ecumenism in time, to use the language of a later day, were not vivid experiences of these theological centers. The practical demands of the day further tended to downgrade the whole theological task in many centers.

Theological education in America had before this time occurred chiefly in the proto-Ivy League universities of Harvard and Yale, both of which were now far down the path of secularization, if contemporary accounts are to be believed. Or
Here it is not our purpose to criticize the fathers who gave institutional incarnation to visions we do not today wholly share; we should only criticize those who uncritically accept the institutional inheritance and look only for minor adaptations to correct the situation ecumenically.

Today, as a result of causes we need not detail, we live in "our present pluralistic society" and most of us give assent to ecumenical tendencies in Christianity. The frustration of divided Christian mission, the "reports from the field" in foreign missions, the recognized scandal of division, and the creative response of Christians from John Mott through Pope John (to cite two figures in a historical course which remains open at each end) brought about a new theological situation. The unsettling experience of war, postwar mobility, opinion change through mass communications, novel experience with judicial decisions which involved new exegesis of constitutional history, and regret over bad interfaith experience combined with the creative efforts of peace-seeking institutions, conferences, foundations, and individuals have given us a new taste for making pluralism work. Can the institutions which were efficient (I repeat the adjective from the document of 1844) instruments for anti-ecumenism and sub-pluralism merely "adapt" and then be instruments for the ecumenical age and the pluralistic society?

Theological educators often give negative answer to this question through the content of their courses if not yet through the context of their curriculums. Almost any significant theological work today is ecumenical. Thorough Protestant theological educators would no sooner neglect John of Damascus or Thomas Aquinas than would Catholics neglect John Calvin or Reinhold Niebuhr. Particularly in the Biblical Field the seminary bibliographies have seen the merger of research and literary traditions. One would not presume to teach American Church History by reference to William Warren Sweet or Sidney Earl Mead without similar reference to John Tracy Ellis, or Colman J. Barry, O.S.B. The N.C.C.J. would not think of calling a conference on theological education in an ecumenical age and expect significant results without having a broad spectrum of religious traditions present. Participants are invited to such conferences as much for positions and competences in these traditions as they are for institutional representation.

But we have not yet seen large-scale institutional and contextual reappraisals. Can content via the printed page in libraries make a durable impact without the context of formal aggiornamento and regular personal exchange?

I have tried to show that the "thing" we have in theological education in America is based on accidents or at least on passing episodes of history with which we do not longer live in a decisive way. The conservative defends "the established order," and in certain moods the theological educator finds good reason to stand with the order evolved through a long experiment and experience in history. Some years ago Emmanuel Mounier alerted us to look for an alternative, "established disorder," the incarnation and defense of accident and anarchy until it looks like a planned and logical response to historical need. Theological educators today are trying to separate the order from the disorder.

What is needed, one is moved to report, is a view "from the end" and not from the immediate past. "End" is a symbolic term for the goal, the purpose, the fulfillment of the theological intention of Christian education, and of the ecumenical movement. That "end" includes the preparation of God's servants who are to show forth unity so that the world may believe, to work together in order to serve the world. Today we commonly observe that seminarians and divinity students are soon bored by the ecclesiastical housekeeping of introverted ecumenical endeavor. Their curiosity is soon and easily satisfied; they resume, after brief ecumenical satisfaction, their disciplines, their extracurricular activities and inactivities. The only kind of ecumenical intention which continues to hold their interest is the only one which attracts the kind of student theological centers want today: an interest in the secular world, its needs and its promise, its demand upon the church. This interest can soon become stereotyped if it appears in a romantic context or through bad education. But if the frightful and engrossing detail of a world in need or a world in creative fulfillment is kept before the student he will ask the ecumenical purpose from the end of the story: how relate to all this?

The basic vision which greets today's students is for them consciously or subliminally one of a secular world. They are increasingly aware that the human enterprise today "rounds itself off," tends to answer its own questions, tends to resist reference to God behind the scenes when it can be content with explanation on the scene. Theological educators want students who are alert to this dynamism, who know — as gamblers say —
because of the mutual criticism different parts of the church bring to other parts as a result of their separate experiences of the world. Orthodoxy in its tradition, theology, and experience knows life in the East; it has been the major Christian presence where non-Christian religions (Islam in particular) have prevailed. Roman Catholicism sees and has known a different world in the Mediterranean and Latin American orbits. The Protestants bring an experience out of northwest Europe and the Anglo-American setting. Articulate representatives of each can check the uncritical claim of universality in generalizations about "church" and "world" in the minds and on the lips of others.

Such theological education can advance the task of fashioning theological language today. Such language learns from Biblical, creedal, dogmatic, and confessional languages of previous centuries, languages developed and frozen for the most part just before the recent four centuries of accelerated secularization helped form a new mind and language among most men who have experienced technology and scientific experiment. Arnold Toynbee reminds us that Christians used to justify the study of mathematics chiefly because it helped the church determine the date of Easter. Ecumenical theology could also falsely use the resources of the secular disciplines to meet its internal ecclesiastical expectations, made newly intricate in recent decades of churchly interaction. But theological education in an ecumenical orbit would, one might expect, also produce more critics or prophets to redirect such partial or mistaken enterprises.

Theological education in an ecumenical age might give depth to the problem of theological substance which is a part of and which is left over when the question of "servanthood" has been asked and answered. For example, the "servant" motif in America is devoted chiefly to facing the horrendous societal problems of racial exploitation, poverty, etc. What happens to each person or class of people rescued from such depriving circumstances into the often criticized middle class with its encompassing appetites and ideologies? (Most of them have no place else to go.) What does the Christian message say then to the affluent, the prosperous, the comfortable? The ecumenical church provides more opportunities for evaluating this message in the light of its many experiences around the world. Theological education in such a setting provides "purity" and "plentitude" in the tasks of Biblical exegesis, philosophical scope, historical analysis.

Happily, the assignment of this position paper for the beginning of the conference is deliberately to be ended short of the programmatic. I shall resist the temptation to intrude upon the area of proposals beyond those which have been implied in what has gone before: theological education in an ecumenical age must be sound education or its ecumenical experience will not fulfill the academic expectations. But that ecumenical experience can be sustained only if it is somehow a) institutionalized and given guaranteed sustenance; b) based on radical appraisal of the ends and means of education and not on minor adaptation of the existent forms based on an often refuted history of the immediate past; c) assured of integrity by the personal presence of "the brother." Sometimes these consolidations may involve union, merger, or federation of theological educational centers. They may imply closing of some or establishment of others, or relocation into new physical contexts. Certainly curricular changes are occurring. New chairs and programs are a part of the changes. But if theological educators are encouraged to bring the resources of their faculties to bear, it is possible that the ecumenical age will give birth to forms that have not yet been anticipated. The position or "place" where things and persons are in theological education today is different already because of changes around them. This difference seeks diplomatic recognition now.