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The
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Magazine

SPRING 1978



The **FURMAN** *Magazine*

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COVER

Professor Willard Pate, director of the Fall Term in England program, photographed this angel on a tombstone in Highgate Cemetery outside London. See pages 14 through 17 for more photographs by Dr. Pate.

Furman University offers equal opportunity in its employment, admissions and educational activities in compliance with Title IX and other civil rights laws.



HENRY



Chaplain L. D. Johnson leads the Sunday morning worship service at Furman.

Furman and Religion

To separate Furman University from religion in all its aspects would be impossible. Furman was founded by the South Carolina Baptist Convention in 1826 primarily to educate young men who were going into the ministry, although the convention stipulated that admission should be open to "any youth, whose education shall be paid for, without regard to sect or denomination."

The convention also specified that Furman should be owned by its trustees who would be elected by the convention and that professors should be, "if not Baptists, friendly at least in their feelings and sentiments to the Baptist denomination." These conditions still exist today: Furman trustees are elected by the convention and Furman professors, if not Baptists, appreciate the free church tradition to which Baptists belong. Seventeen faculty and staff members are ordained ministers.

The South Carolina Baptist Convention continues to support Furman financially; each year the convention appropriates nearly \$1,000,000 to Furman for operating purposes and capital needs. For its part, Furman gives preference to Baptist students in its admissions policies and meets all financial needs of students who are committed to church-related vocations.

Originally named the Furman Academy and Theological Institution, Furman operated as a preparatory school and seminary until 1851, when the college department was added and the school's name was changed to The Furman University. When the Southern Baptist Convention decided to establish the Southern Baptist Seminary in Greenville in 1858, Furman closed its theology department so that the theology professors and library could become the foundation for the new seminary.

Although Furman ceased to be a seminary more than 100 years ago, it

has continued to educate many young people who go into the ministry or some other type of church-related work. According to a recent survey, 424 Furman alumni are serving as pastors of Baptist churches in South Carolina and a significant number are pastors in 23 other states. A large number of Furman graduates also serve as associate ministers, ministers of education, ministers of music, ministers of youth and other types of denominational workers. Sixty-five are foreign missionaries. Approximately 200 students now attending Furman are planning to go into church-related work.

As a church-related, liberal arts college, Furman maintains a strong Department of Religion. The eight members of the religion faculty are authorities in fields ranging from biblical studies to the philosophy and psychology of religion. In their teaching, religion professors focus on the study of God and man, the relation between God and man and the relation between man and man in the sight of God. These studies involve the study of the Bible, Christian history and thought, institutional religion in man and culture, and the religions of the world.

Each winter members of the religion department conduct an eight-week study-tour of Israel and other Middle Eastern countries. Furman students who study abroad in the fall term visit famous churches and cathedrals in England, France, Italy and Spain.

Two university chaplains attend the spiritual well-being of the Furman community. Chaplain L. D. Johnson and Associate Chaplain James M. Pitts spend a great deal of time counseling students on an individual basis, and they also take part in informal dormitory discussions. The chaplains work with the religious organizations on campus, present university worship services each Sunday and in their Religion-In-

Life series bring outstanding speakers to the campus.

Dr. Pitts, who is coordinator of church-related vocations, works with students who are planning church-related careers. He introduces them to area churches, arranges internships for them with pastors and other church-related professionals, and guides them in the selection of post graduate training. He also directs the annual Church-Related Vocations Conference and Seminary Day.

The chaplains also sponsor Furman's Pastors School which brings to the campus each summer about 500 pastors and their wives for lectures by world renowned theologians and biblical scholars.

Joe Roberts, a Baptist minister who serves as assistant to President John E. Johns, devotes most of his time to working with Baptist pastors and laymen. He represents Furman in churches and denominational meetings throughout the state.

Although there is no formal connection with religion, approximately 1,000 students demonstrate their concern for others each year by working with the Collegiate Educational Service Corps. These students work as regular unpaid volunteers in 72 local agencies and organizations — day-care centers, children's hospitals and clinics, neighborhood centers, nursing homes, schools, churches, miniparks and state institutions.

In 1974 in an attempt to identify Furman's purpose and values, a task force of faculty members, administrators, students and a representative of the South Carolina Baptist Convention drew up a statement of character and values, which was

Right: President John E. Johns welcomes high school and college students to the annual Church-Related Vocations Conference at Furman.

*Furman continues to educate
many young people who
go into the ministry or
other church-related work.*



HENRY

Furman recognizes its obligation to encourage students to confront the problems of society.



subsequently approved by the Board of Trustees. The statement says that Furman is a person-centered community which emphasizes the worth of the individual and encourages concern for others. It affirms the importance of freedom of inquiry and states that "the task of the church-related college includes wrestling with ultimate problems as they arise in contemporary forms, with a point of reference being the Word of God revealed in Jesus Christ."

The statement says that Furman recognizes its obligation to encourage students to confront the problems of society and "to exercise moral judgment over the use of their knowledge in that society." "To suggest by silence that there are no moral implications to the use of an education," it continues, "is to fail as a Christian College."

Confirming Furman's role as a church-related college, the statement concludes, "Furman commits itself to academic excellence without compromise of its Christian heritage. Furman affirms the worth of both the life of learning and the life of religious faith and morals."

In a recent study of 49 Southern Baptist colleges Dr. Earl J. McGrath, director of the Program in Liberal Studies at the University of Arizona, discovered that Southern Baptist colleges have increased their total enrollment by 31 percent in the past 10 years. "Our yearlong studies clearly indicate that one major factor in this growth among Southern Baptist schools is directly related to the clarity of their purpose and mission," Dr. McGrath said last summer at the

Pastors and their wives enjoy the Furman campus during Pastors School each summer. (left)

*The McGrath study revealed
that Furman is stable,
committed to its purpose,
and has a bright future.*

annual meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools.

"Our nation is hungry for moral, ethical, spiritual moorings," he said. "Our educational institutions have been criticized by the general public for not giving the people more help in solving these dilemmas. They want the kind of education — the kind that stresses values as well as knowledge — which your Baptist schools are clearly giving."

Furman was one of those Southern Baptist colleges studied by Dr. McGrath and found to be in good condition. His study revealed that Furman professors and administrators are committed to teaching and to the development of students' character and values. The study indicated that Furman, like most other Southern Baptist colleges, is stable, committed to its purpose, and has a bright future.

Endorsing church-related colleges recently, President Carter said, "One of the greatest needs of our society today is finding new ways to develop responsible moral education. The church-related college by its very nature should find in this a unique opportunity.

"The church-related college also has an opportunity to espouse in a new and fresh way the dignity and worth of the individual, and to instill in the student the social sensitivity and the moral courage which good citizenship requires, and which this country and the world so desperately need."



Associate Chaplain James Pitts works with students who are planning church-related careers. (right)





A Certain Sound

by L. D. Johnson

*"If the trumpet give an uncertain
sound, who will prepare himself
for the battle?"*

Two forces press the church-related college to ask itself pointed questions about what it is up to. One is the plaguing economic problem. Without continuing and increasing support from benefactors, there is no way to keep costs within the range of the average-income family with two or three children to educate. Plainly put, Furman's ability to remain a good liberal arts, church-related college depends upon attracting and retaining financial support from those who believe that it is possible for a college to be both academically strong and motivated by Christian principles. That aspiration may finally rest upon Furman's will to identify and articulate clearly her reason for being, a task not for development and public relations people alone, but for policymakers, teachers, alumni, admissions officers and students.

The other force pushing the private college toward self-appraisal and definition of purpose is the student himself. Thoughtful young people — their number is



*“The spiritually sensitive student
sees institutions wearing religious
labels but detached from
involvement in ethical issues.”*

considerable at Furman — are conscious of the bankrupt value system of many institutions in this society. Some come to college from homes where moral values are secularized beyond the probability of restructuring. The spiritually sensitive student sees institutions wearing religious labels but detached from involvement in ethical issues. He notes the slowness of such institutions to respond to world famine or everyday injustice. He is distressed by the lack of imagination and inspiration displayed by this society in gearing up to meet present crises.

He knows that Watergate happened during the presidency of a man who holds degrees from two church-related institutions of higher education, and who had regular Sunday worship services in the White House. A significant number raises religious and philosophical questions about purpose, priority and meaning. The sharp contradiction between our Christian profession to be servants and our gulping, greedy consumption of resources, as if there were no hungry masses and no tomorrow, is an embarrassment to students aware of global conditions. The student activist of '69 holding protest meetings or banging on administrators' desks demanding radical change, has been replaced by a less angry but no less concerned student who is not caught up in rhetoric or dreams of utopia, but who wants realistically to find some way to help redress inequity. He is no less an idealist but is committed to reform rather than revolution.

Further, the religious enthusiasm with which many of the present student generation arrived at college is now being reappraised and deepened by serious examination of the biblical and theological implications of spiritual experience. Much of the chaplains' time is used helping students do that important work. Frequently the dialogue begins like this: "I now realize that I have to know something, not just feel something." That leads to issues about what things mean and how one views the world and one's role in it. "What is the purpose of learning? Is it an end in itself? What rights and responsibilities accompany my privileged position? What can I do to make things better?" These questions are heard daily.

Who is better fitted to address them than the church-related college? More specifically, who is more responsible to act as an agent of inquiry, and moral and spiritual change, than a college committed to "academic excellence under Christian influences?" The point is that neutrality in such matters would be not only irresponsible for Furman, but it is also untenable. Learning as an end in itself, imposing no obligation to examine the moral ends to which learning is put, may be an acceptable assumption in certain colleges, but it is indefensible in the church-related college. To be worthy of its trust, a college

such as Furman must have the extra dimension of a clearly-defined purpose that encourages the intellectual community to wrestle with the religious and ethical meanings of existence and knowledge.

How the college clarifies and implements this responsibility I take to be among its most urgent business. Perhaps an illustration will help. In Corinth, Greece, in the mid-first century of the Christian era a small, quarrelling congregation of Christians struggled to shake itself free of domination by its culture and to find its true mission. The city was filled with a bewildering hubbub of religious and philosophical voices clamoring to be heard. Popular philosophical and ethical maxims could be read along the streets. "The Wise Man Is King," "Knowledge Is Freedom," they proclaimed. Cults and mysteries abounded. In the church itself schismatic groups declaring unswerving loyalty to Peter, or Apollos, or Paul, or even Jesus, held tenaciously to their positions. Another schismatic group in the church claimed a form of spiritual elitism because they spoke in tongues. And on the acropolis above this city filled with conflicting religious and ethical options stood the Temple of Aphrodite, goddess of sexual passion. Aware of all those clamoring claims, Paul, their spiritual father, wrote the following admonition to the church: ". . . If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for the battle?"

The church-related college as a force in the redeeming and humanizing task, has an obligation to "give a certain sound" about its perception of meaning and values. The Christian college's commitment is that God is the Source of all truth and that he has revealed ultimate truth in Jesus Christ. This is not to suggest that the discipline of academic effort is replaced by sermons and testimonies. It is to say that the Christian college derives its sense of purpose and clue to ultimate meaning, and determines its priorities, in ways consistent with the revelation of God as expressed in biblical faith.

How does the church-related college sharpen the focus of its identity, both to itself and its constituencies? Although appropriate, neither declarations in the college catalogue nor public statements of the institution's character and values is adequate. It is not that such proclamations are offensive but that they are meaningless apart from evidence of implementation. The self-deception of word games is a universal human hazard, but for professionals like those of us in churches and colleges it is well-nigh endemic. There is most certainly a time to say that we are a "Christian college," just as there is a

Right: Each year the Collegiate Educational Service Corps brings more than 2,000 children to the campus on May Day, Play Day. Last year Brette Simmons and Vicki Will entertained children from the Cerebral Palsy Center.



"The essence of God-likeness is mission, that is, meeting a need because it is there...."

time to declare one's patriotism, but saying it doesn't make it so. How make it happen?

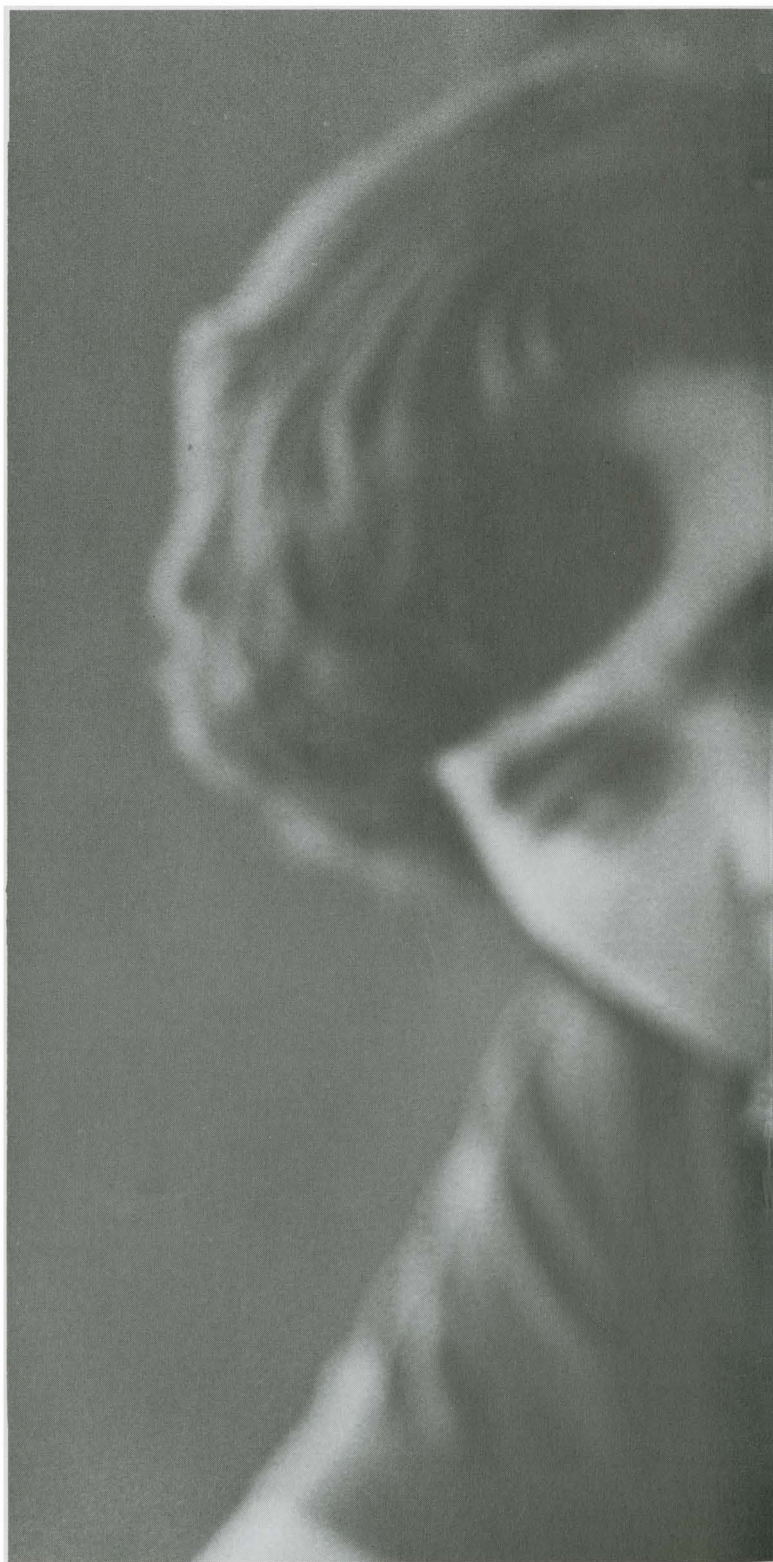
First of all, by seeing the denomination's involvement in the college as an aspect of the mission of the church. Both the South Carolina Baptist Convention and Furman need to clarify the relationship. If the justification for the annual investment of almost \$1,000,000 of Baptist money in Furman be that the college bring distinction to Baptists or proselytize students to become Baptists, the motivation is unworthy of the name "Christian." Jesus never said, "Go out and give cups of cold water to thirsty people so that they will appreciate you and adopt your views of God." Nor did he suggest that the Good Samaritan ministered to that poor Jew left beaten and bloody on the side of the road in order to improve the image of Samaritans with Jews. No, as Jesus saw it, the essence of God-likeness is mission, that is, meeting a need because it is there and you have something to give. Whenever any aspect of mission becomes functional and self-serving it ceases to be mission.

Churches operate hospitals because people are sick, not to make converts of the sick. They maintain children's homes and retirement homes for the aged because those are ways of actualizing the Lord's command to help those who need it. They also found and support colleges because young people should have the option of an education which raises their consciousness of the moral and spiritual implications of knowledge. If either the institution or the denominational body which fosters it fails to see the institution as an expression of Christian mission, the identity of the institution is distorted or the relationship with its founder is strained.

As the mission of a church-related hospital is the practice of the best and most humane medicine, so the mission of the church-related college is the most competent and fervent search for truth. It does this on the basis of a faith commitment by its faculty, administrators and staff that truth has its ultimate meaning in God and that learning places the learner under moral obligation concerning the uses to which it is put.

Higher education as Christian mission may be illustrated by the old story of the juggler who wanted to make an offering to the Lord but had no money to give. He came into the church, stood before the altar and did his juggling act. It was the best way he knew to give thanks to God. If I understand my vocation as a means of expressing faith in God, and what I am doing is done as unto him, I will not be satisfied to give a third-rate performance. To offer less than my best would be an insult.

Right: Service Corps members work with Furman employees in their fields of special interest. Dan Kelly, class of 1971, talks with Alec Carter, now retired.







A graduate student helps a child learn to read.

WHITMAN

*Does the college encourage its
students to use their education
for the welfare of others
or for their own advantage?*

That goes for juggling, but also for teaching, administering, student-ing, or whatever else is connected with the educational enterprise.

After the first week of a course I was teaching, one of my ministerial student friends remarked that he had been disappointed in the class because I hadn't given my testimony yet. I told him that I gave my testimony every morning at eight o'clock by showing up prepared to make the best use I could of the next fifty minutes with those thirty students. This is not to suggest that the professor without a Christian commitment may not be counted upon to prepare his lectures. It is to say that doing so is part of my mission as a Christian. Now, I think that that student has the right to know, and I have the right and responsibility to let him know, where I stand in terms of ultimate meaning. But my commitment is not a substitute for competence. It is an incentive.

Secondly, the church-related college gives a certain sound not only by the way it treats the teaching-learning enterprise, but also by the way it treats persons with whom it is related. At Furman we talk a lot about the personal nature of teacher-student, administrator-student, and student-student relationships, but the claim has to be validated over and over again. It cannot be taken for granted just because we say it is true, or assumed because we are a small college. One can be just as lonely and alienated, and feel just as depersonalized, in our beautiful rose garden as anywhere else.

Besides the high quality of interpersonal relationships there is another aspect of person-centered higher education. It is the institutional attitude toward persons. The church-related college gives a certain sound concerning its Christian commitment when it treats all people, regardless of station or office, whether employees, benefactors, students, or strangers, as persons to be valued and cared for rather than as objects to be used, or necessary adjuncts and instruments of the institution's furtherance. It might be good business to operate on the principle that the institution's needs are more important than the individual's, but it is poor Gospel.

Thirdly, the church-related college gives a positive sound concerning its identity by encouraging the healthy growth of community spirit. This includes appreciation of the college's heritage, the contributions of predecessors, as well as concern for the needs of successors. Like most half-truths, the doctrine of unrestrained individualism is only valid enough to be plausible. Denial of our mutuality, and rampant individualism, constitutes one of the most serious threats to the preservation of a humane society. The anonymity of a faceless crowd, where rejection of caring for others is institutionalized, fosters a selfishness that denies the claims of community. Wherever community is rejected in favor of "every man for himself," there is an inevitable withering of values. Values are not

merely individual decisions, but the product of community which sustains, purifies, and transmits them from one generation to another.

Elliott Richardson has said that "the forces underlying Watergate morality persist. And very importantly among these forces is the decline of a sense of community . . . Watergate was a tragedy not so much of immoral men as of amoral men — not so much of ruthless men as of rootless men." The words clearly warn the college that it has no more important agenda than development of a tradition of mutual concern and genuine community among those who share life on the campus.

Fourthly, the college gives a certain sound by the example it sets in establishing its own economic and human energy priorities. Every institution, through its various managerial offices, has to make policy decisions based upon value judgments. If one can't afford everything (and who besides Mr. Rockefeller can?), how does one decide which things can be afforded? What ground of belief is reflected in budget allocations, in honors bestowed, in public stands taken, in internal operational regulations? How does the institution, as part of the total human situation, behave as a consumer? How do its policies reflect awareness of and involvement in the crucial issues of this day? Does the college live in its ivory tower, being careful not to offend, or does it give leadership in the community for those causes that serve the human family? Does it encourage and prepare its students to use their education for the welfare of others, or for their own advantage? In the answers which the church-related college gives to such questions lies the issue of whether or not it has anything distinctive to say in the world of higher education.

The trouble with this kind of descriptive commentary is that it tempts one to commit the common error once cited by Martin Luther. He said that society is like a drunken peasant who tries to climb up on his donkey only to fall off the other side. Then he climbs back up and repeats the process from the opposite direction. We give our version of the "ideal" church-related college. If we are not careful we may fall off into ridiculous pride, intimating that we have described what actually exists at our college. Or we may climb up and fall off the other side into defensive self-accusation. I would not like to do either. As far as Furman is concerned, I doubt that those of us connected with it suppose that it should be renamed "Utopia University." At the same time, I would want to insist that there are a great many people at Furman who are trying to understand and be responsible for the sound made here.

□

Dr. L. D. Johnson is chaplain of Furman University.



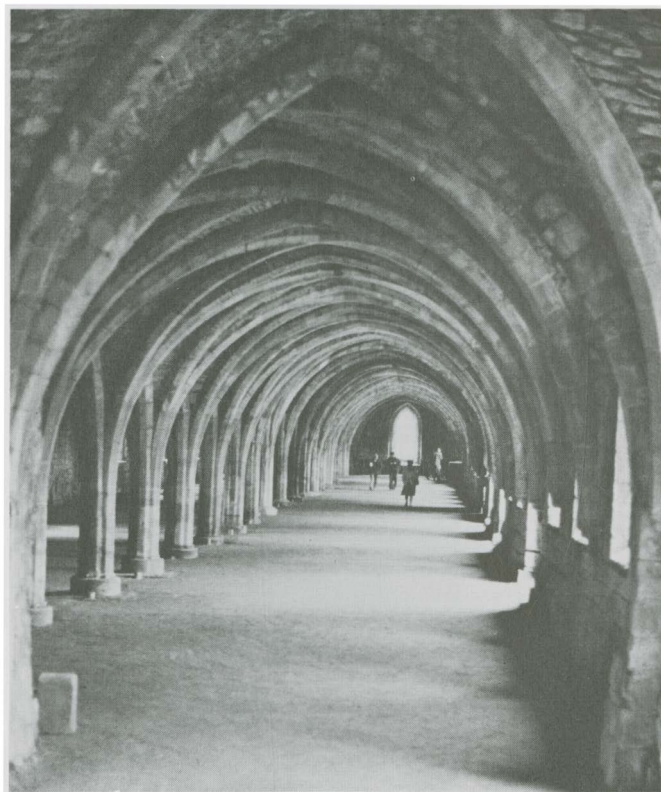


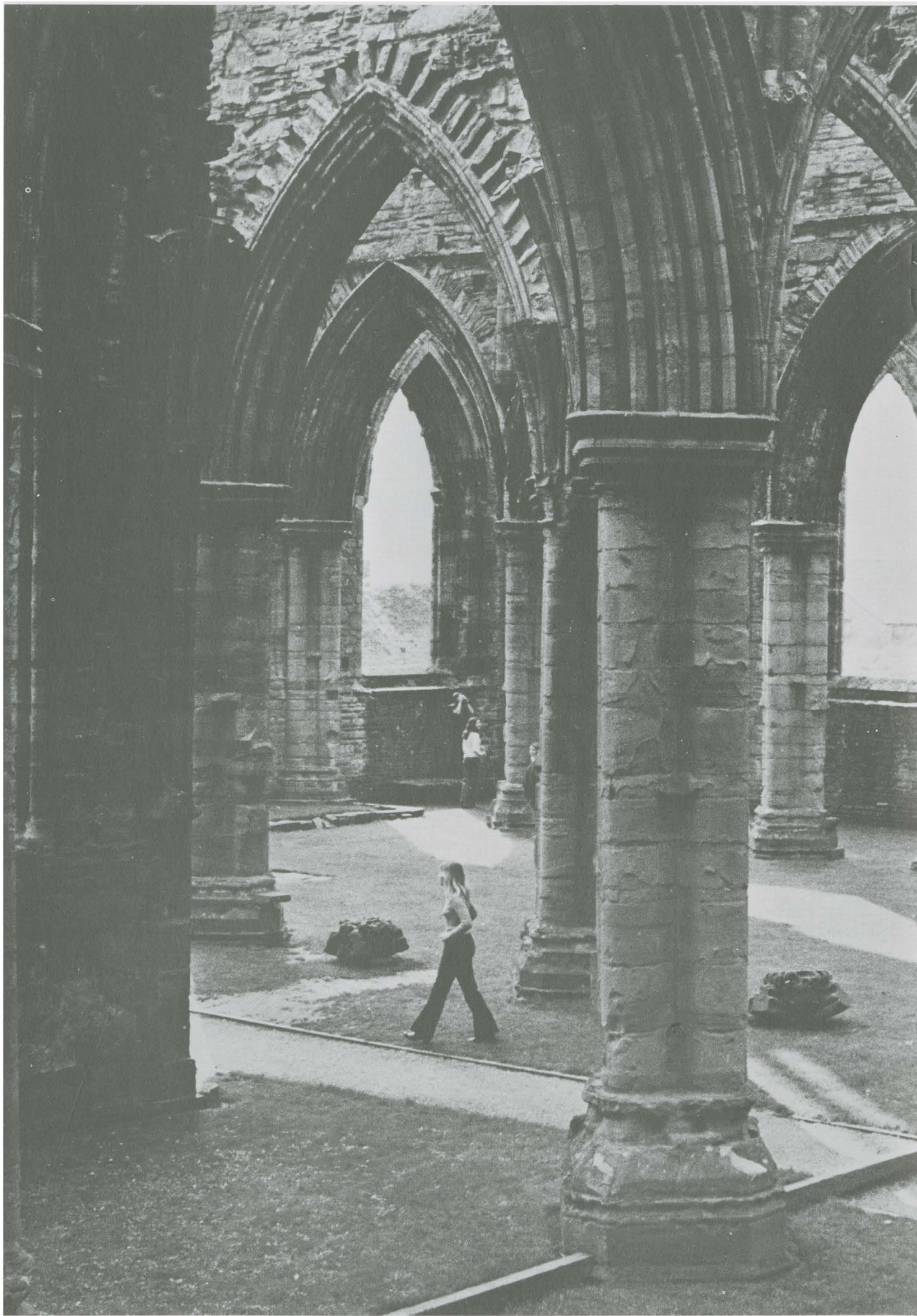
Famous Churches

As part of their studies abroad, Furman students visit churches and cathedrals all over the world. In England, France, Spain, Italy, Austria, and even Japan, they spend some time seeing places of religious significance, while the eight-week trip to Israel and other Middle Eastern countries is devoted to the study of biblical archeology and church history.

Dr. Willard Pate, director of the Fall Term in England program and an accomplished photographer, has recorded many of the sights which Furman students have seen abroad. She took the photographs on these pages in England and France.

Sculptured heads decorate the corbels in the Chapter House at York Minster in England. (left) Students Artie Anderson and Jeryl Kendall walk along the Seine beside Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. (above) Furman students sometimes visit the refectory at Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire, England. (right)





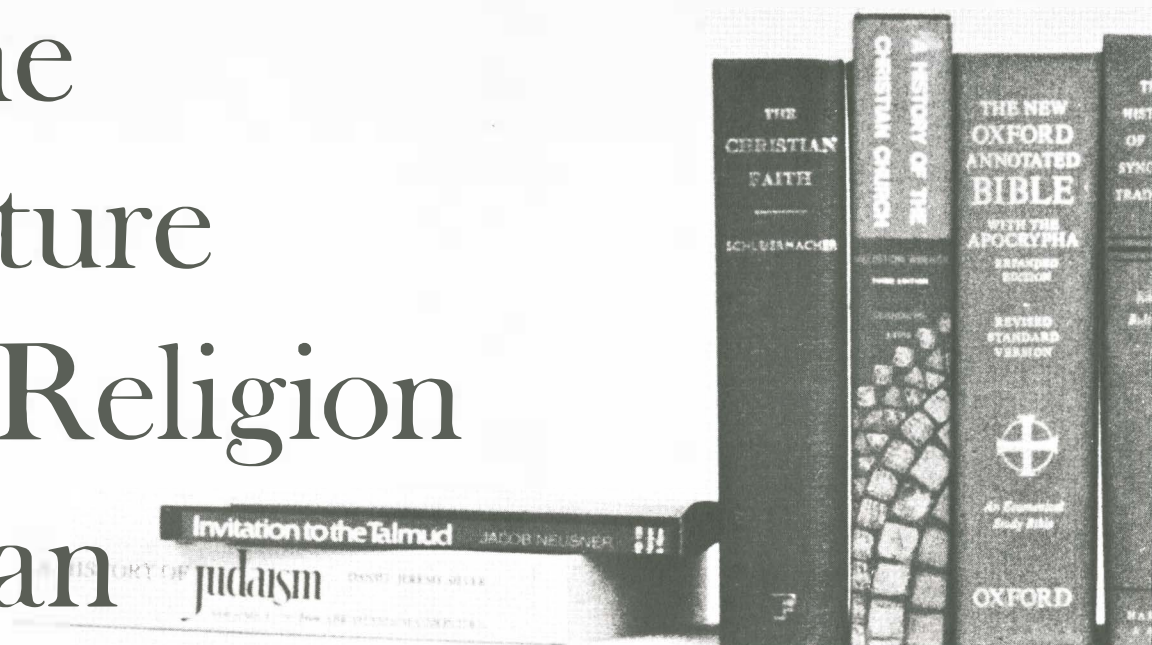


*Furman students
in Tintern Abbey*

The Future of Religion

as an

Academic Discipline



Forty-four years ago in September I arrived, unannounced, at Ouachita College. I had a “call to preach,” an undefined sense of the need for an education, and \$12.00 in cash. Were it once more 1933, and everything the same, I would gratefully go again.

At Ouachita in 1933, the president was the administration, and considering the resources with which he had to work, his achievements appear on the graph somewhere between solid and remarkable. The faculty was small, carrying a good number of excellent human beings on its list, including a few scholars. Most of the others also favored learning. I remember them fondly. The students, 400 in all, were chiefly Baptist, chiefly Arkansan, and, so far as I can see, chiefly practical in educational motivation. One went to college in order to qualify for a better job — or, in 1933, in order to get a better shot at any job.

Preparation for the ministry somewhat modified this motivation, leaving the rationale for ministerial education less than clear. It was clear that to serve in what we all called “full-time Christian service” was not exactly the same as getting a job. It was less clear why one who was specially “called” to such service was not thereby fully equipped for same.

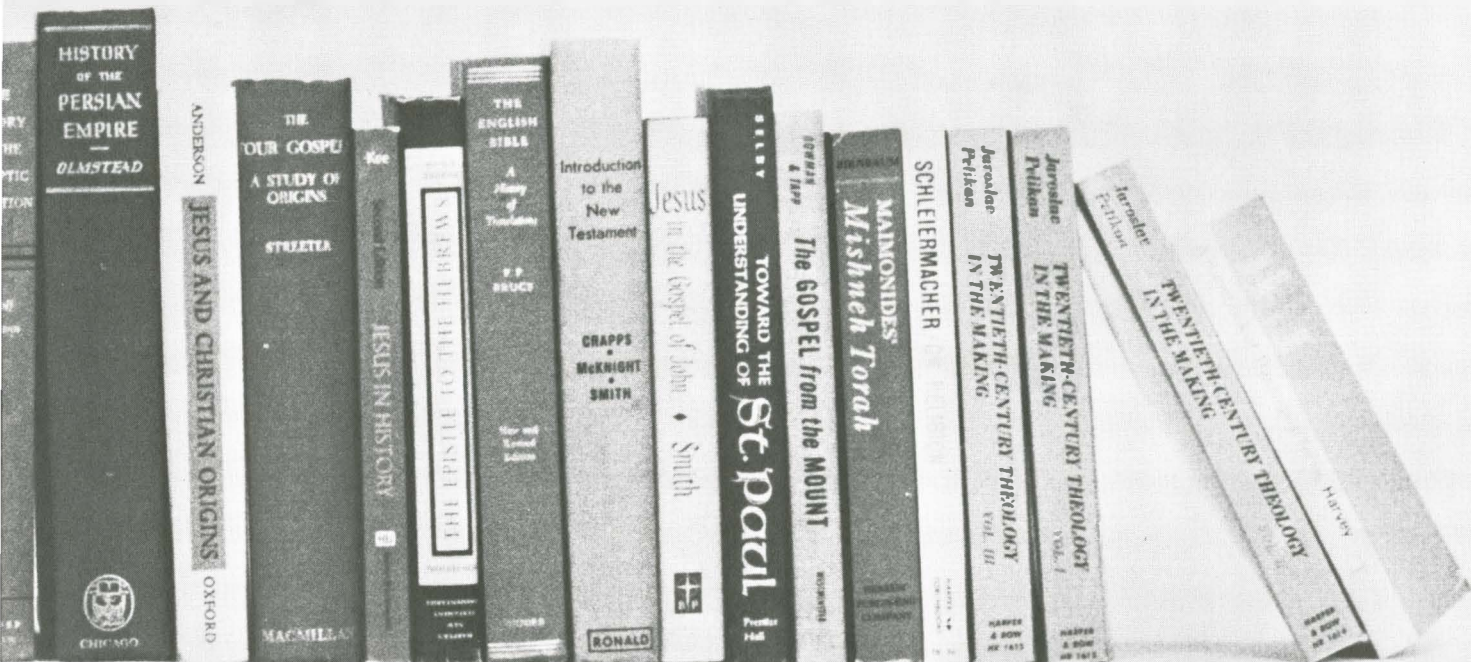
We went to Ouachita, nonetheless, to get an education, including preparation for the ministry. In those earlier years of experience with Baptist colleges I was aware of no well-wrought-out philosophy giving form to the under-

graduate study of religion. Some of the courses would hardly have qualified as humane learning. Religion was taught because the school was Baptist, and because the constituency thought it ought to be taught. By some portion of that constituency, education was feared to be at best dangerous, at worst subversive. It was as if one needed a place where, while getting an education, his religion could be kept intact or even undisturbed.

Back then, it was generally observed that all “preacher boys” should major in religion. It was unheard of that anyone but preacher boys should do so. This tended, so far as religion studies were concerned, to make education parochial. (I took a course in the Sunday School and Training Union study series.) The education was also carefully preprofessional, with only little emphasis upon the “pre”: homiletics, stewardship, and missions. These courses “blessed” me in various ways, but a present-day curriculum committee at Wake Forest or Furman might be slow to endorse their proposal.

For many (though not all) of our schools, such an age of innocence has already receded into the past. The courses in a large number of our schools can now pass muster at curricular and academic inspection.

The reasons for this change are numerous and complex, but two seem most significant. As departments have matured, as we have been exposed to the learning and ambience of other groups, as we have gained fuller recognition from sister departments as participants in the



by Theron Price

overall educational life, the academic quality of our own curricula has been improved. The second reason is that Baptist colleges are further removed from denominational bureaucracies than once they were — except as new colleges regularly arise to fill that dreaded gap. But overall, a small and increasing number of our Baptist colleges in the southern United States, have developed into what the Danforth Report, some dozen years ago, called “free Christian colleges.”

Where are we now? What problems do we face? One problem is the necessity in Baptist life to fight a sometimes losing battle against pragmatic policy and program. Before now our schools have either too easily removed themselves from cultural involvement, or too totally made common cause with culture’s pragmatically defined goals. We have not always maintained moral striking force, nor viewed academic and human relations in better moral perspective than secular colleagues. Theologically vacuous, we have not always noticed that all institutional policy, followed to its end, touches directly upon issues which lie in the province of morality, and even of religion. Southern Baptists tend generally to operate as a society of devotionally oriented pragmatists. We tend to have more ecclesiastical business than we have theology, and to sponsor more education than we actually believe in.

This is one problem. Another is the undeniable amount of uncertainty about who we are. It is still

difficult, for example, for one of our colleges to give an adequate, not to say honest, definition of itself. Examination of any of the periodic “self-studies” will disclose this problem as both complex and stubborn. This prompts us to reflect that perhaps one of the important tasks of a Christian college is to work faithfully at the unfinishable job of discovering what it is.

This lack of self-definition as a college is reflected also in the departments. It is difficult to say precisely what we are doing and why. To be sure, for about ten years we have stressed innovation. This has been chiefly for two reasons: we have known we needed to do something; and, we have not wanted others to recognize that sometimes we ourselves did not know for sure what it was. There has been some genuine innovation. There have also been more changes in course titles than in courses.

Yet our effort to come abreast of the times and of our responsibility has been incomplete rather than fatuous. Actually, great and exciting things have been going on.

We have at least worked on, if not fully solved, problems of professional and vocational identity. Especially in the past 30 years much thought has been given to the definition of the basic character of religion studies. As a result our discipline is now more conscious of its relation to the humanities, especially philosophy, history, and the classics; as well as to other divisions, especially to the social sciences and the arts. It functions less as a form of doctrinal transmission than formerly and less also as a

*"The school should be concerned
for religion, but the school
must never be the church."*

department of pastoral care. Neither of these concerns, in principle legitimate and important, are university or department functions as such. They may be expressed by any believer from any department with any other person, even on a campus. I personally give attention to both concerns, especially the latter, in talking with students. But in the past 30 years the study of religion has become an academic discipline, i.e., a major area of human experience, identified for special study, on terms appropriate to their subject.

This is a development healthy and welcome, and I hope that much of it reflects attitudes and energies from within our own vocation. One of the stimuli back of it, however, has come from without. I mean the rapid expansion of good departments of religion in state and private nonchurch-related schools. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has for years had a large and strong department with good library holdings. It has been teetering for some years on the brink of scheduling doctoral studies in religion. Such a program, manned by a dramatically expanded department, has just been announced by the University of Virginia. Florida State has moved in the same direction. In the long range, all this will strengthen the hand of the already existing programs at Emory, Duke and Vanderbilt. It will both strengthen and challenge the academic labors of those denominational seminaries which do not function as schools in a university, especially those seminaries with doctoral programs.

For church-related schools, the formation of graduate and undergraduate departments of religion studies in state universities signals a promise which is also a challenge.

The promise is that graduate study in religion will be uniformly underwritten by adequate library holdings, by scholarship which operates under the scrutiny of the whole academy of letters, and by extradepartmental overlappings which both challenge and support. The academic qualifications of those who teach religion will be as rigorously defined as those who teach philosophy, history, sociology or physics. Appointments to teaching posts in religion will follow procedures comparable to those in other departments.

According to "Religion as an Academic Discipline," a brochure circulated by the Commission on Religion in Higher Education of the Association of American Colleges, courses in religion will also "be assessed for credit on the basis of standards that apply to other academic disciplines." It says that religion courses will "be designed to promote understanding of an important human concern rather than confessional commitment." In short, the school should be concerned for religion, but the school must never be the church. In no way does this mean that

those who have our academic profession must forswear our religious vocation.

The challenge of this promise touches us in two ways. One is the urgent need for a thoroughly furnished pool of qualified scholars in religion, Baptist or otherwise, who can live with some peace in our setting: men whose work as researchers, as teachers, and as participants in academic life, matches or advances the highest university standards. I see little significant future for Baptist schools as *academic* institutions, which resist the logic of this direction. There should be, and in actual fact there is, a community of scholars in religion engaged in literary, historical, textual, linguistic, comparative and theological work who are advancing learning in religion. Baptists shall participate in this or will have little bearing upon the shape of religion as an academic discipline in our nation. We shall participate in this or will — in the long run — have little bearing also upon the direction of the religious life of our nation. Survival-with-significance is at stake. But we do have some things going for us.

We have a percentage of excellent Baptist scholars in our ranks. Some of them have been repudiated by the denomination. Still others work in Baptist colleges and seminaries. But in only a few of the colleges, and in none of the seminaries, have we achieved the capacity to participate freely, without threat of penalty, in the academic study and teaching of religion. Academically, this is a serious condition. It is my belief that it is also serious religiously. For the sake of the denomination there must be a community of Baptist scholars whose first loyalty is not to the denomination. The Word of God does not seem to come to and through those for whom the institutional form takes precedence over the truth it serves. Every religious body must hold itself under the judgment and the promise of its own gospel. To be alive is to be able to grow. Growth involves both continuity and change.

But there is also another side of this concern. And it is important. The colleges themselves must not forget that authentic study of religion dare not ignore the life of the whole community of faith. Paul Minear is probably on target in predicting last year that by the twenty-first century "all respectable theological work in America will be lodged in university departments of religion." This may help to make or to keep seminaries honest. Yet we need to weigh the recent words of Brevard Childs and of Avery Dulles. Childs has reminded us that study of the Bible, for example, "cannot be allowed to function in isolation" simply "as a relic of Ancient Near Eastern or Hellenistic culture." Dulles of Catholic University writes, "if university theology is forced to conceal or deny its relationships to faith and to the living community of faith, theology may have to migrate to more congenial territory — the monastery, the seminary, the apostolic

"Threatened alienation of good departments from the church is another problem."

Dr. T. C. Smith, an authority on New Testament studies and Judaism, is now chairman of the religion department.



HENRY

center, the theological institute." The church must with courage and humility face the winds of critique. The university must not deny theological reality nor identify religious truth with the methodology by which it is studied.

Threatened alienation of good departments from the church is another problem. This problem cannot be solved by departments' accepting the role of a "denominational agency." Nor can it be solved by doing one quality of work while interpreting it to the constituency as another. We must seek to know the truth, and to speak it plainly in love. I know of nothing more finally cynical than with conscious intent to act as though, especially in religious matters, we need some things more than we need the truth. If sometimes we professors need patience with the church as it is, the church as it is needs, deliberately, to nurture the sense of need for hearing any concerned critique. Neither side dare lose the capacity to reorder its course by the imperative of truth. It is absolutely essential that we give to each other the right to speak with

impunity. We must give to each other the courtesy of listening. To be able to hear, to learn, to be changed by the appearance of light and truth — this is part of what it means to repent.

There is much theological work to be done. It seems to be of high importance that it be done well. There are also certain concerns within the Baptist family which affect the future of our schools. These concerns affect especially the lives and callings of the religion teachers on their faculties. Nor are these concerns unique to Baptists.

An important question for all of us was raised recently in urgent form by Paul Minear, "Will we, in the coming years, do our work primarily as a church vocation or as an academic profession?" The developments in this generation tend to enhance the "profession" at the expense of the "vocation." This has its merits, but one consequence is that the Bible is sometimes not taught "from faith to faith" but simply as ancient literature to be studied by approved critical methods. Indeed, there is a rather startling article by John A. Miles, Jr., in a recent issue of

"Our work must clarify genuine issues and raise the church's level of awareness to them."



John McDonald, a freshman from Chattanooga, Tenn., takes a course in religion, like all other Furman students.

Bulletin, titled, "The Debut of the Bible as a Pagan Classic."

But have we, for example, taught the real Bible if it has not carried us who teach it through its own rhythms of worship and ethical work? And is not our understanding of the character of biblical literature in fact incomplete when it has not been learned in the concerned struggle of faith for faith-in-the-world? This is a problem.

A kindred problem is the question of what duty is owed to his denomination by a Baptist professor of religion?

Obviously, the debt we owe the denomination, while not absolute, is large. The education of many of us was largely underwritten by the sacrificial giving of Baptist people. Many of these people did not themselves enjoy the privileges they provided for us. I confess my gratitude and love as humbly as I know how. The organized life of these people is expressed through denominational agencies, directed by elected and appointed officials. We, like they, are under the obligations of love and service.

What we professors are not under, however, is a mandate to provide justifications for any view of preference which happens to gain official or popular sanction, or to remain quiet when others do so. On the one hand, our work must clarify genuine issues and raise the church's level of awareness to them. It must humbly offer lines of possible resolution of such issues and seek to sensitize all our consciences, rather than simply to show that we are well informed or to enhance our standing in the eyes of our fellow scholars. And despite the sort of surgical quality entailed, such work must act to free us — professors, officials, and people — from personal and institutional stultification resulting from commitment to unexamined ideas.

Our calling is not God's calling unless it transcends both all existing denominational sovereignties and all institutional loyalties. We are true agents of the church only as we are authentic agents of the truth. Our simple commitment is to truth which sets men free. The words of the junior McNeil Poteat have haunted me since first hearing them in 1941: "the worst heresy is the fear that truth, when it is known, might not be good." It is not simply sad, it is a denial of faith, when we suppose that whatever is official is valid, or that whatever is controversial is, for Jesus' sake, to remain unaddressed.

If somehow the denomination could accept, for the sake of growth in truth, the disturbing aspects of our professional work; and if somehow Baptist professors of religion could achieve greater appreciation for the importance (not the sanctity) of denominational structures and greater sense of need to contribute to them, how fruitful might the relation become.

The relative absence of such a relation produces unfruitful results. We teachers are less sustained and

*"We do tend to affirm freedom
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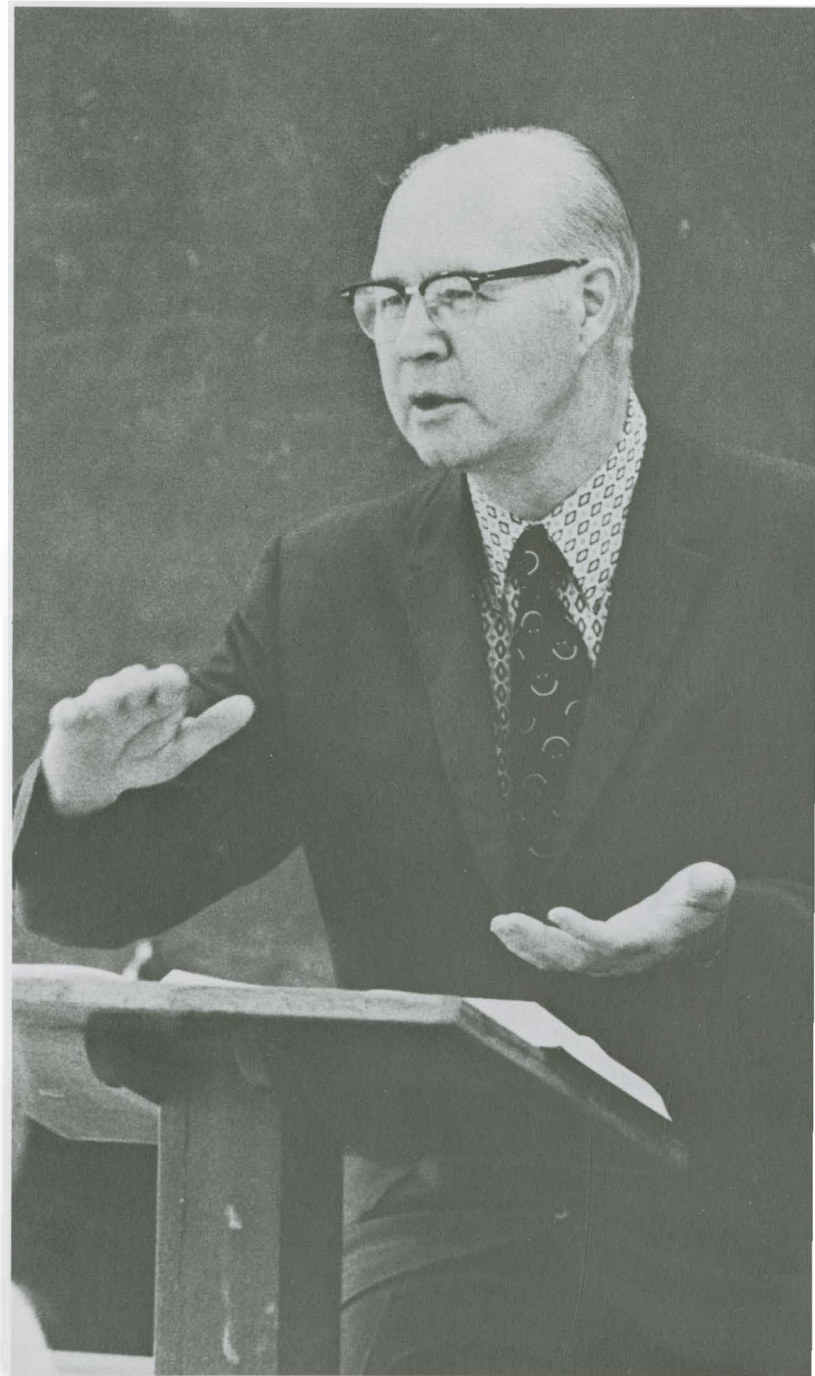
blessed by a denomination more distant from us than our souls can well afford. The denomination in turn loses much of the serious biblical and theological help it might otherwise receive. This would include a more decisive understanding of the nonfinal character of all denominational thought and existence as such. We champions of freedom should prayerfully reflect upon the fact that Hans Kung's, *The Church*, can carry the imprimatur of the vicar general, and that Henton Davies' *Genesis* was withdrawn from circulation by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. We do tend to affirm freedom of thought for those who will agree not to use it. Alexander Hegius, in a letter to Wessel Gansfort, said, "All learning is pernicious that is attended with loss of honesty." He might have added that, on the same terms, all denominations are dangerous.

To say all this is, hopefully, to say something helpful. At least I hope it has been more than saying that "if things were different, things would be different." There is no great denomination which does not know that it is not great. We have too glorious a birth-right to be interested in the price of pottage!

Our heritage is both massive and brilliant. It is precious. I can think of no greater intellectual endeavor than bravely to explore it, no greater ethical challenge than gratefully to hear its message of rebuke and grace, no greater glory than the vocation to pass on the torch of its light to others.

In Keene, New Hampshire, on Memorial Day 1884, Oliver Wendell Holmes, addressed his fellow veterans of the American civil war. He spoke with eloquent respect both for the Union men with whom he had marched, and for the brave Confederates whom they had fought and by whom he had three times been wounded. And he told them why he felt about them as he did. "Through our great good fortune," he said, "in our youth our hearts were touched with fire. It was given us to learn at the outset that life is a profound and passionate thing. While we are permitted to scorn nothing but indifference, and do not pretend to undervalue the worldly rewards of ambition, we have seen with our own eyes, beyond and above the gold fields, the snowy heights of honor, and it is for us to bear the report to those who come after us."

This for posterity; for love of nation! For love of God, could we do less?



Dr. Theron Price, Reuben B. Pitts Professor of Religion, has taught at Furman since 1962 and served as chairman of the religion department for fourteen years. This article is adapted from an article by Dr. Price which appeared in Perspectives in Religious Studies.

Albert Blackwell— Teacher of Religion

by Terry Walters

*Albert Blackwell is “honest,”
students say, because he
lives what he teaches.*

You can't divorce the teacher from the person. That may be true of all good teachers, but it seems especially true of the winner of Furman's teaching award for 1977, Albert L. Blackwell.

Blackwell's selection as winner of the Alester G. Furman, Jr., and Janie Earle Furman Meritorious Teaching Award was one of the most popular ever. When the announcement was made at commencement last June, graduating seniors demonstrated their approval by giving the young professor of religion a standing ovation. Later in the vestibule of McAlister Auditorium you heard such comments as: "He's a great teacher." "I never had a class with him, but I hear he's fantastic." "Yeh, and a great guy."

When students talk about Blackwell, a frequently-heard term is *honest*, and that's about as high a compliment as young people can pay. It's a word that for them encompasses much more than the matter of telling the truth. *Honest* means authentic, "all together," fair, genuine, open. *Honest* means he lives what he teaches. *Honest* is another way of saying that you can't divorce the teacher from the person.

Blackwell, who joined the Furman faculty in 1971, became a teacher of religion in a roundabout way, although he has known ever since high school that he'd like to teach.

"It was a matter of what subject," he says. At Mars Hill College, where his father, Dr. Hoyt Blackwell, was president, he considered majoring in music, then settled on science. After two years at Mars Hill, he went on to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he majored in physics.

During his senior year at MIT, an excellent teacher of philosophy and philosophy of religion, Huston Smith, turned Blackwell's interest toward religion studies. That interest intensified when Blackwell joined friends at Harvard Divinity School to hear lectures by Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr and sermons preached by George Buttrick at Harvard Memorial Church. Speaking of the impact the three religious thinkers made on him, Blackwell says, "I'd never before encountered such a combination of Christian religion and massive intellect."

Because of Blackwell's growing interest in theology, Huston Smith helped him obtain one of the Rockefeller Brothers Scholarships which offered undergraduate students who had not majored in religion and would not otherwise attend seminary the opportunity to do so. Blackwell says, "I went to Harvard Divinity School thinking I'd go for a year and find out the answers to my questions. . . . I'm still at it."

Continuing his studies under a Danforth grant, Blackwell obtained a

B.D. and then a Ph.D. at Harvard. Along with his studies, he gained experience as a teaching assistant, working for a time under Richard Niebuhr, nephew of the renowned theologian.

Although Blackwell obtained a bachelor of divinity degree, he has never sought ordination. He explains, "I'm not temperamentally suited to the parish ministry and I did not want to cash in on the benefits that go with the 'reverend' before your name if I wasn't going to do the work."

The only member of the Furman religion department who is not an ordained Southern Baptist minister, Blackwell thinks that gives the department the possibility of serving more students. "One of my concerns is to make the department a place where not only committed Christians can find nutrition, but also students who are going through some crisis, or have rejected their religion, or just weren't brought up in the tradition. As a Baptist institution, we probably shouldn't go so far as schools that teach courses in atheism, but we have to remember that there are students here who want religion courses not explicitly Christian in orientation."

Many people fail to see the distinction between the academic study of religion and Bible study or evangelism, according to Blackwell. "Even some faculty members don't under-



*Blackwell tries to promote
a livelier intellectual atmosphere
on the Furman campus.*



The "Humanities Table" and "Soup Group" met one day this spring in Blackwell's backyard for a picnic and discussion.

*Teaching religion is difficult,
says Blackwell, because
students have so much at stake.*

stand that there are various approaches to scripture, and good teaching has to find the right balance between imposing one's own commitments and keeping a scholarly detachment."

He points out that teaching religion is difficult because students have so much at stake. "It's different," he says, "from a subject like history. After all, not many students come to college committed to a particular view of history. In religion, however, if you are destructive of certain beliefs, it's important what takes their place."

His greatest rewards come, Blackwell says, watching students mature. "It's not that they accept a particular point of view, but that they grow. They come in as freshmen, sometimes with a very pious enthusiasm but narrowly informed, and you see them broaden intellectually and find social channels to express their beliefs."

It can be risky, Blackwell admits. "I worry about the students for whom the academic study of religion raises questions for which they will never really find answers to replace the old ones." But then Blackwell laughs: "Of course, most students aren't that much affected by what we say in class."

Davis Perkins, a former student who is pursuing a Ph.D. in theology at Vanderbilt, describes how intensely Blackwell affected him: "In him I discovered an intellectual guide who showed me the value of the theological enterprise. . . . He demonstrated the importance of thinking reflectively about religious matters and coming to terms critically with a received religious tradition, and the necessity of allowing religious insight to be integrated into the totality of one's life."

One reason students admire Blackwell is that they see him living the principles he talks about. As Perkins continues, "He has managed successfully to bridge the gap between

thinking and doing . . . He does not merely savor his thoughts in an ivory tower but acts in a way that reflects a profound commitment to humane values."

Admitting that as a student he was more politically unaware than most, Blackwell credits the Vietnam War resistance movement for his education in social action. He continues to work for causes he believes in, especially disarmament and alleviation of world hunger, as a member of such groups as New Directions and Clergy and Laity Concerned.

On campus Blackwell prefers the role of advisor to that of leader, and describes himself as just another member of the Social Action Coalition, an umbrella organization for campus groups concerned with social action. Betsy Nelson, a student leader who heads the coalition, says of Blackwell: "He is the one who keeps us honest. For instance, even though we're all opposed to nuclear weapons, he makes sure we consider the other side of the issues, even to suggesting we involve Col. Guldner of the ROTC in our disarmament project."

Besides encouraging students to do something about world problems, Blackwell tries to promote a livelier intellectual atmosphere on the Furman campus. He worries that "we tend very much to be a classroom school. Students come to class and if they're fortunate they learn, but after they leave class the environment is not such as to stimulate intellectual life." One of his "little missions," he says, is to try to move discussions into the dining hall and into the students' lives. With philosophy professor James Edwards, English professor Duncan McArthur and others, he participates in two informal campus discussion groups, Humanities Table and the Soup Group. Humanities Table is a casual get-together of faculty and students at lunch in the dining hall after humanities class several times a week, for discussion of

issues raised in class or other matters of concern. Soup Group brings ten to twenty students and two or three teachers together every Thursday night for a simple supper where they discuss a thesis prepared by one of the students. Blackwell calls it the best educational experience he has had at Furman.

What makes students enthusiastic about Blackwell's teaching, both in class and outside? What leads to such comments as "Humanities II is fantastic — it might even be worth taking for no credit at all"? First there is what Davis Perkins describes as Blackwell's "vast breadth of knowledge." Then, according to history professor James Smart who team teaches with Blackwell, there are his "evocative approach" — the ability to find the specific detail which opens up larger issues — his fine sense of humor, and his ability to relate and synthesize material. Smart says: "He keeps relationships in mind and points up connections — say, between Shakespeare, Milton, and Pope — rather than treating each figure separately."

Illustrating Blackwell's quiet, yet effective approach, Perkins recalls sitting on the front porch of the Blackwell home one summer afternoon, working through Paul Tillich's *Systematic Theology*: "He entertained my simple questions and, without a trace of condescension, responded in the clearest of terms so that I appropriated Tillich's theology for myself. I can imagine how easy it would have been for him to have simply responded out of his own erudition, but that would have short-circuited the learning process on his terms. Albert Blackwell's pedagogy exemplifies the ideal of the unselfish Socratic midwife."

To find out more about his students, Blackwell sometimes asks a class to name their heroes. Ask Blackwell to name his own and he has no hesitation in naming three.

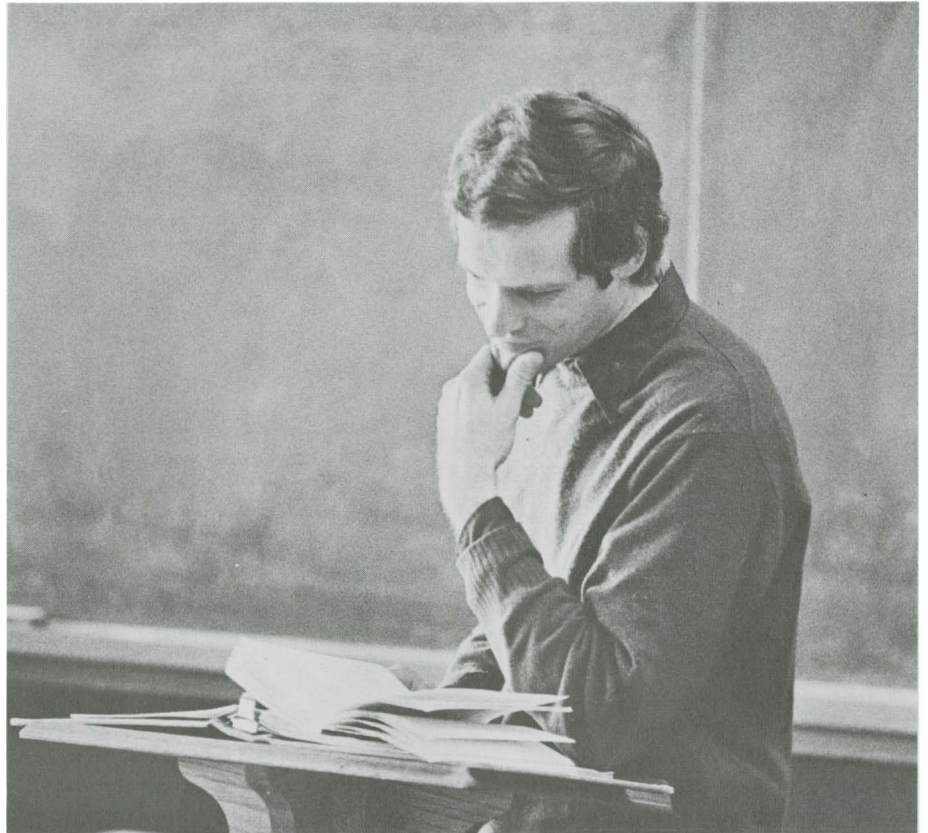
*Albert Blackwell goes about
in a quiet way trying
to make a difference.*

The choices say a lot about him. First there is the journalist I. F. Stone: "A funny looking guy who looks like a leprechaun. I love him for his courage, intelligence, compassion and championship of freedom of the press." Then come two musicians: the late George Szell, conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra, and Arturo Michelangeli, the Italian pianist.

It is obvious that music is a dominant theme in Blackwell's life. Having studied piano from the age of five through his second year of college, he decided against majoring in music because he realized he would always "do" music anyway. Today, music is more an avocation for Blackwell. He not only works as the senior choir director of a local church, but weaves music into his religion and humanities courses whenever he "can find a reason that's not too outlandish."

Much as Blackwell enjoys teaching, research is also important to him. Because he finds it very difficult to do research and writing along with teaching, two years ago he took a leave of absence to return to Boston and his studies of the theologian Schleiermacher. Blackwell describes his subject as "generally thought-of as the greatest Protestant theologian since Calvin, but one who is badly misunderstood." Characteristically, he says, "I love Schleiermacher very much — he is one of my close friends." That year's study produced articles in the *Harvard Theological Review* and the *Journal of Religion* and the manuscript of a book, *Determinism, Freedom and Fantasy: the Early Life of Friedrich Schleiermacher*.

Blackwell's wife, Marian, is herself an author. A registered nurse who holds a master's degree in anatomy and teaches nursing at Greenville TEC, she is completing work on *Nursing Care of the Mentally Retarded*, to be published by Little, Brown and Company next January.



Blackwell notes proudly that Marian had a publisher for her book even before she started writing, whereas he has been working on his book for years and is still looking for a publisher.

With their two children, Christopher, 8, and Jody, 4, the Blackwells live in an older neighborhood near downtown Greenville. From there, Albert bicycles six miles to the campus and back each day. He does so, he says, because it's healthful and cheap, but also because of his concern for the environment.

A man full of concern about world problems and such dreadful possibilities as world famine and nuclear holocaust, Albert Blackwell goes about in a quiet way trying to make a difference. He finds Furman a congenial setting. Of the private liberal arts college in general, he says:

"As education, it is vital to the republican form of government, and as one avenue to the pursuit of truth, I'm all for it." Of his situation at Furman, he says: "Furman offers me plenty of freedom and is very supportive of what I do. More or less, I feel I'm doing what I ought to be doing."

At 39, that's an enviable place to be. □

Terry Walters is editor of
Furman Reports.

Right: The Furman Singers and Concert Choir frequently perform major sacred choral works. Darla Bandy is a member of the Concert Choir.



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