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THE CHURCH AND EDUCATION

Risto Lehtonen

Anza Amen Lema

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CONTENTS

THE CHURCH AND EDUCATION

- Risto Lehtonen: The University and the Church Today 107
Anza Amen Lema: Church and Education in Tanzania 123

EDITORIAL

- Hans Bolewski: The Church and the Task of Education 143

- GENEVA DIARY 145

REPORTS AND DOCUMENTATION

Education

- Merton P. Strommen: Alienation, Gratification and Disenchantment 150
Erich Weingärtner: In Search for Alternatives to the Educational Establishment 155
Karl Ernst Nipkow: Religious Instruction in Comprehensive Schools—Challenges and New Possibilities 162
Walter H. Capps: Religion in State University Curricula: Future Theological Reverberations 167

Commission on Education

- Herbert G. Schaefer: Christian Education in a Secular Society. Report on the World Conference of the LWF Commission on Education—Geneva, 1969 172

Commission on Worship and Spiritual Life

- Friedrich-Wilhelm Künneth: Lutheran Responsibility and Liturgical Reform 181

- LITERATURE SURVEY 185

ing. Consequently, the religion course must, in regard to this problematic task, decide whether and in what sense it is a subject which demands academic achievement.

Religious instruction is probably not well advised when it is involved in a quest for achievement which is pedagogically questionable. As previously stated, the majority of the older students do not want "a value to be placed on learning" in the religion classes as in other subjects. The overwhelming majority also object to grading.⁸ At the same time, many students expect the religion class to mediate knowledge and many are also seeking help in problems regarding their faith.⁹ It seems as if the older students become, the more sensitively they react to being forced to learn in the area of religion. Many want to learn something, but on a voluntary basis. One can—and should—make allowances for this presupposition in the comprehensive schools in the following ways.

There is the possibility of developing an organizational form which is already to be found in the upper levels of the Odenwald school.¹⁰ Here the religion class is included

⁸ i.e., 81.7% of those questioned in the previously mentioned poll, as over against 8.1% who voted "Definitely" and 9.2% who voted "Generally".

⁹ In both cases, roughly 50%.

¹⁰ W. Schäfer, "Die Odenwaldschule Oberhambach - Integration aus innerer Notwendigkeit", in H. Frommberger, H.-G. Rolf (eds.), *Pädagogisches Planspiel: Gesamtschule*, Braunschweig, 1968, p. 84 f.

basically in the core courses; every core curriculum course, however, even the religion course, can be elected in the 12th and 13th grades within the framework of definite combinations of electives. It is then no longer a required core course for that pupil. One must certainly presuppose that the student shows both capability and particular interest for the subject concerned and that, on the whole, his achievements have been satisfactory in the preceding grade. The elective course in both grades is then given an increased number of hours and also carries weight in the final examination, at least in terms of the oral examination. In this solution it is worth noting that the religion class is accepted as an intellectually demanding course like the other subjects and, at the same time, that the concept of achievement is related to the student's interests. Special effort is required only when the student himself responds with his own involvement and indicates this by his election of the subject. One needs to examine whether this alternative of a choice between the religion class as subject of the core-group courses or as an elective ought to be moved to the puberty period and thus to that age group with which the comprehensive school is chiefly concerned. Although, from the age of 14 on, students can to some extent regard religious instruction as a pure elective anyhow, in our opinion, every educational regulation which, additionally, appeals to the free initiative of the student, appears to be beneficial for the meaning of this disputed subject.

WALTER H. CAPPS

Religion in State University Curricula: Future Theological Reverberations

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After the dust settles, say twenty years from now, when men are writing histories of theological developments in the 1960s, much will be made of the emergence of religious studies programs within the regular curricula of state-supported institutions of higher learning. A host of other occurrences and phenomena, some already obvious, will be given much attention. For example, the first decade of the second half of the twentieth century will forever be known as the era of Vatican Council II. The Council, its sponsorship and confirmation of the spirit of *aggiornamento*

within the Roman Catholic framework, and the theology which it both exhibited and made possible, will always be regarded as one of the superlative events in the history of the church and as a landmark in the development of religious consciousness in the western world. The 1960s were also party to a number of other lesser but nevertheless commanding interests and movements: the rise of the "secular city"; the "death-of-God" currents; the rebirth of situation ethics; the appropriation of themes from the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Pierre Teilhard de

Chardin, to name but two prominent influences; the varieties of stances included in the all-encompassing phrase "new theology". The same decade saw the disclosure of a "hope school" both in philosophy (primarily through the work of Ernst Bloch) and in theology (through such key spokesmen as Jürgen Moltmann, Johannes Metz, and Wolfhart Pannenberg, as well as through the developing dialog between Christian and Marxist theoreticians such as those sponsored by the Paulus-Gesellschaft). Perhaps no other recent theological movement bears as much creative promise or as many constructive possibilities. The sixties were witness also to a certain heightened sensitivity to the presence of "the faith of other men" (in Wilfrid Cantwell Smith's words), the religions of Indian, Asian and African cultures. And with this geographical expansion of the theological horizon came a certain spatial or cosmological enlargement—an expansion which made the conflict between scientific technology and human values of crucial concern. The expansion on geographic and cosmological fronts was accompanied by sobering awareness of the fact of *color*: color as the primary identity characteristic, and the interdependence of coloration and social, political, ideological, and economic preferences. No one will be allowed to forget good Pope John XXIII, and no one will not remember Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X.

Surrounded as it is by such an impressive array of significant events and interests, the emergence of religious studies programs on state university campuses is apt to become overlooked. Without the attention which was drawn to some of the other issues, without the publicity which accompanied the birth of some of the other movements, this "quiet revolution" (as Robert S. Michaelsen calls it) might almost slip by without notice. And yet, in the long range, its occurrence may be as significant as most of the other theological developments which come quickly to mind, and, quite possibly, more important than a lot of them. It is more important and ultimately more impressive because it is different. It is different because it registers in a great variety of ways. It is not similar in kind to the "new theology", for example, because it resists being classified as another attempt to reconstruct thoughts and attitudes. In this respect it shares certain characteristics with the Vatican Council; each of them has been effective, though in different ways, in establishing a new context for the discussion and assessment of religious affirmations. Each has been instrumental in effecting a kind of rapport which had not existed prior to its

time. Yet, the religious studies program is also very much different from the Vatican Council even in regard to that which they share: the former can be claimed by no segment of Christendom, nor even on behalf of religious communities themselves. Its occurrence belongs just as much to the world of the humanities, the social sciences, and the arts, and its religious overtones come just as directly from the history of educational traditions.

To be sure, the issues are not always put this way. It is not often acknowledged that the development of religious studies in state university curricula constitutes an event of theological significance. It is much more customary for the sophisticated to place such matters in the framework of church-state relationships in America. Or, one can talk of such things by reference to the academic and extracurricular interests of students in this highly volatile, transitional period in societal and political life. Much can be said about the uncommonly high number of students enrolled in courses in religion throughout the country. Because these courses are taken as electives, their impressive enrollments can be used as evidence against would-be critics of student preoccupations that the present generation has not deviated from traditional norms and values as much as might be suspected. And, since a great variety of other interests come to focus upon the university, a great variety of other criteria come to be used in assessing the significance of a program in religious studies. For example, parents are concerned that sons and daughters be provided with a kind of "spiritual nurture" in order that the religious practices and attitudes begun at home will be maintained. Students themselves become interested in courses in religious studies to compensate for their frequent disillusionments, or as aid in reconciling their recently-acquired environment with those which have been experienced since childhood. Then, there is the contention of the devotee of the humanities that the wholeness of life is diminished unless one is thoroughly acquainted with the arts, the great works of literature, and the traditional influences of religion upon man's cultural expressions. In addition, usually from the outside, the promoter of religion (minister, priest, rabbi, swami, professional church worker, the more-or-less committed) recognizes that the university campus is a major field on which the battles between belief and unbelief, faith and despair, religion and secularity are being won and lost. He senses that the religious studies program possesses an access never before granted, a

forum previously not allowed. And, at times, a university administrator has been known to call upon "religious students" to answer the perennial accusation that schools of higher education are sources of "immorality and loose living". Apparently nothing can demonstrate better intent than a programed effort, under university sponsorship, to inculcate the values and moral codes of the great religions. All of these vested interests have been translated into criteria by which religious studies programs have been positioned and understood.

It is not often said that the emergence of religious studies programs within the regular curricula of state-supported institutions of higher learning is an event of great theological significance. This is not often said because everyone involved in the enterprise has been taught to say that theology is not what is being done. Under their charters, departments of religious studies are not designed to engage in theological work. Instead, as one such statement-of-purpose reads ". . . courses in Religious Studies are designed to provide students with the intellectual tools and scholarly background required for a critical understanding of the forms and traditions of religion that have appeared in human culture". Another one reads: "A department of religion in a state university is inevitably concerned with the study of religion from the standpoint of both the humanities and the social sciences." [Such programs have been indexed and described in Robert Michaelsen, *The Study of Religion in American Universities* (New Haven: The Society for Religion in Higher Education, 1965), and in Milton D. McLean, editor, *Religious Studies in Public Universities* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1967).] These statements certify that vested theological interests in religion are not the auspices under which religions are being approached. They also indicate that the religious components of culture, for example, will be studied with the same kind of dispassionateness as that which belongs to objectivity in any other field. In the same way that no one else in the university is appointed as a propagandist, promoter, or a representative spokesman for a particular ideological bent, so too the instructor in religious studies is asked only to assess critically the data which falls within the range of his professional competency. He is required to be nothing more nor less than a trained craftsman of an art and discipline. Hence, it is frequently said that what occurs in churches, seminaries, before altars, in prayers, in hymns, when religiously sensitive people speak edifying to each other, and

so on, pertains to "the language of religion", whereas that which occurs in the university classroom belongs to the "language about religion". The two are never the same. Utilizing that distinction, one can go on to point out that neither language produces the other. The "language of religion". One cannot look to a class in religious studies to inspire men to be religious, nor can one expect that what occurs in the church will bear much resemblance to what occurs in the school. There may be resemblances, of course, as well as a variety of exchanges between the two dominions; but none of this can be planned or programed. Thus, the distinctions can be correlated with constitutional provisions regarding the separation of church and state. Theoretically, it also assures that religion, and not theology, will be the subject under scrutiny. Whatever theology there is must enter on the wings of studies about religion.

And yet theology is being done—perhaps not overtly, but at least subtly. Theological interests, for example, become one of the chief regulants of the curricular formats by which courses in religious studies are arranged. For a variety of reasons, the earliest programs in religious studies in public universities were tailored by the Protestant seminary curriculum, and many current programs continue to bear that influence. To a great extent the original fourfold division of subject areas—the historical, systematic, biblical and practical—has been retained, though refined and embellished. Of course, the word "systematic" has given way to "religious thought", and the word "practical" has been removed because it implies a mistaken notion of implementation. In addition, the missionary, evangelistic or apologetic tendencies of the seminary have been replaced, or at least tempered, by such words as "involvement" and "dialog". Similarly, in "the language about religion", scholarly descriptive-objective work rules out a prescription of beliefs, attitudes and doctrines. Because the focus is on the *variety* of religious orientations—and not simply on what occurs within one of them—the "language about" stresses comparative techniques. It gives much of its energies to the cultivation of an impartial methodological posture. And because the comparative techniques are applied to cultural phenomena, there are built-in tendencies toward taking the content of the study of religion from the so-called *isms*, the major religious systems or traditions of the world (Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism, Taoism, Judaism, Islam, Christianity, et al). Yet these methodological tendencies and foci have developed in corre-

spondence with the expansion of the Christian theological horizon. In the early days of ecumenical sensitivity, for example, the university curriculum in religious studies was designed to honor the distinctions between Catholics, Protestants and Jews. When "the faith of other men" forced theological consciousness into recognizing religious traditions which had no strong ethnic or cultural ties with American or European Christianity, then a new category—often referred to as "non-western religions"—was opened up. But that new dimension, the entire range of expansion sponsored by the "other-men" syndrome, has been incorporated in most religious studies curricula in much the same way that it has been honored in the seminary. It has become attached to the established areas of research and scholarship as a kind of fifth area of inquiry, without disturbing the initial fourfold thrust. The crisis at the present moment concerns the vitality and viability of the original fourfold structure: if it does not have sufficient strength to sustain itself in the increasingly expansive religious horizon, it will no doubt be subsumed within a structure which is regulated by that which earlier was referred to as the "fifth area".

Theological interests also reside in the motivations which lead men to pursue teaching careers in religious studies on the faculties of public universities. Much of this developing interest derives from occurrences within the Christian tradition itself. Since the end of World War II, more and more of the churches' enthusiasms have been pointed in the direction of the so-called "secular university", sometimes because of failures and defaults elsewhere. Perhaps this tendency is part of an ethnic phenomenon, an attempt in some communities to break free from a previous sub-culture status in American life in order to enjoy full representation in the main stream of thought and activity. During the past twenty years, some of the Protestant denominations which had invested in higher education earlier by founding their own colleges became more and more intrigued by the prospect of creating professorial chairs in established public institutions. The financial factor looms large in this respect, as does the increasing number of constituent student members who are enrolled in non-church related schools. Church colleges cannot muster sufficient resources to take care of all of "their own" students. Nor are they equipped to offer the full spectrum of courses required by each of the varied and complex occupations and professions which register in technology-oriented contemporary society. For these reasons, and a host of others, there

is some sense in looking to a religious studies department at the state university as a new lease on life for men, who, presumably, had they lived earlier, would have been most eager to seek faculty positions in the church colleges. Programs in religion in the "secular university" appear as a new frontier, perhaps even as an unexpected opportunity.

Then, within theological tendencies themselves, there is the large matter of "secularization", or the apparent lack of relevancy of established patterns of religion in the western world. One early result of that discussion was to create new interest in the university as an institution which could not be threatened in the same way as the church. For many, the university was looked to as the locus for reconstituting "meaningful religion". Indeed, to this day the university has loomed up as a kind of neutral ground—a way station—for men, particularly priests and ministers, who have become disenchanting, disappointed or disfranchised from the institutional church. It is not difficult to understand, then, why a position such as that of the late Paul Tillich is almost synonymous with the format of many programs in religious studies. Tillich's stance is particularly sensitive to the one for whom the contemporary church no longer provides resourcefulness, but, who, nevertheless, feels sufficient emptiness or nostalgia to be unwilling to abandon the religious interest altogether. As Tillich recognized, then normatized, even those who have left the church have not necessarily forsaken religious "concern". Beyond that, the Tillich schema provides religion with a kind of implicit theoretical rapport with other disciplines within the university, since, as its architect saw it, every responsible cultural endeavor can be examined for what it exhibits regarding man's quest for meaningful existence. Then, too, Tillich's stance is one which honors the attitude of many students who have a stake in the "other-men, other-values, and other-worlds" constellation of interests, especially in its contention that no finite religious expression (whether doctrines or a religion itself) should be given an absolute status. When a position offers rapport with other fields, respect for those disenchanting with "organized religion", confirmation of secularist attitudes, as well as a way of approaching the religions of the world, it appears almost tailor-made to the university context. The future will record, however, that the price one pays for these built-in services is very high. In a word, under Tillichian auspices, the distinction between the "language of" and the "language about" religion gets reduced to "the study of religion"; and "the

study of religion" has a way of masquerading as religion itself. The future will also certify, however, that Tillich's thought was more influential than anyone's in aiding the establishment of religious studies programs in the university curriculum.

Thus, despite some official disclaimers, it is the case that theology is present in religious studies programs in state-supported institutions of higher learning. Theology has been the nest out of which a great portion of the interest has come. It has also provided much of the structural terminology by which such programs have been constituted. Theology has fed religious studies with both instructors and students, and probably will continue to in the foreseeable future. In addition, it has had a formative effect upon the arrangement of religious studies, especially when it has been able to help expand or reshape the horizons of religious interests. To be precise, the theological movements and events which have formative influence on religious studies are those which lie at the cutting edge of the religious horizon—those which have been expansive or reconstitutive. The developments within theology—*theology's intramural work*—never serve religious studies as constructive or creative forces. For instance, the shape of religious studies would probably not be altered at all if it could be demonstrated that Joseph Marechal and his contemporary disciples are probably correct in basing a Thomist philosophy on pre-cognitive rather than on cognitive factors. But it can change a great deal when an anthropologist like Georges Dumezil contends that a tripartite social structure is implicit in man's earliest religious experience.

These factors serve to make the reverse situation the more intriguing. Acknowledging that theological factors have been influentially present in the establishment of religious studies programs in public universities, how does one assess the potential influence on theology which such reciprocity might entail? What formative effect will religious studies have upon the shape and content of theology? In a word, on what basis will future historians of religious affairs regard the emergence of religious studies programs on university campuses as a significant theological event?

By way of preface, it must be said first that the university will not prove to be a haven of refuge for men with theological training and leadership capabilities who did not feel comfortable with churchly occupations. If the university has been looked to to provide

this service, the future will show that that service is of very short duration. The university will not become a religious sanctuary for either masters or pilgrims. Teaching positions in the field will probably not become plentiful. The interests which have been invested in the seminary do not automatically transfer to the university, despite the fact that the activities in both places belong roughly in the same field. By the same token, the churches should not look to the university with enthusiastic expectation, or regard such centers of learning as unanticipated open doors, now that many of them have lended a certain academic respectability to things religious. The churches may reap little if any residual benefits from the university's sponsorship of religious studies. It perhaps need not be said that the religious studies program is in no sense a campus ministry, and its faculty members are not to be equated with university chaplains. At the same time, the churches will be reminded constantly of the presence of religious studies programs. They will feel such influence, and will know they have been affected.

With respect to theology proper, the future will probably show that religious studies programs have the kind of influence that previously has been associated with such men as Karl Marx and Søren Kierkegaard—perhaps preeminently Sigmund Freud. Just as it is impossible to understand the development of German theology in the first half of the twentieth century without referring to two world wars, so too it is impossible to come to terms with the theological developments since the early nineteenth century without acknowledging the presence of Kierkegaard, Marx and Freud. It is not enough to say that theology is shaped by contextual factors. It is more accurate to say that Kierkegaard, Marx and Freud raised the kind of deterministic human questions which prevented theological reflection from being the same as it was before. All three men opened worlds of experience and endeavor which had not been known before. All own a strategic, structural place in the formation of a modern religious consciousness. The religious studies program may serve in the same capacity. Because of its location and charter, because it stands at the interface between a great variety of interests and disciplines, it is charged with raising religious questions in strikingly novel ways. The ingredients which it brings together have never been co-present before. The materials on which it can draw have not been blended before. The critical tools which it can command have not been cultivated before. And all of this can be em-

ployed to assess the place of theological factors in the development of western (and eastern) culture. This, of course, is not the fundamental purpose of a program in religious studies; and, yet, it cannot escape its purview. And when it does occur, that assessment cannot help but become acknowledged by whatever theological reflection is able to emerge in the future.

Initially, these new forces will probably break the long-standing alliance between theological and philosophical positions. Previously, theology has almost always felt a special dependence upon philosophy; it has taken many of its questions from philosophical concerns, and has consciously employed philosophy's critical apparatus as well as its structural components. But, in the future, that association will be expanded to include other fields of interest; and, in the larger circle, philosophy will lose its former prominence. It is highly possible, for instance, that the theologians of the future will find that they have more in common with political scientists, aestheticians and urban planners than with philosophers. And such expansions of interest will also make it impossible for theologians to proceed with their work according to self-

referential criteria. It will not be enough that their contentions articulate with the primitive Christian *kerygma* or with sixteenth century Reformation slogans. Beyond that, they will be judged on the basis of the resourcefulness of their contentions to mediate the human future which men sense ought to be. Theology may be considerably reduced in size by these encounters, or it may be expanded, but it cannot help but be affected. And in the reduction as well as the expansion lies the occasion for a new kind of self-consciousness.

In the long run both Marx and Freud will become known to have had an energizing affect upon Christian theological reflection, though, initially, their proposals were understood to be debilitating. It will be this way also for the program in religious studies on the university campus. Its earliest reverberations, once it moves beyond its present nascent stage, might not appear to be edifying when viewed from theology's interests. Over the greater span of time, however, religious studies will prove to be beneficial to theology, though, because they have different sources of origin, never life-sustaining. And the same can be said, I believe, when one's interest is the church.

HERBERT G. SCHAEFER

Christian Education in a Secular Society

Report on the World Conference of the LWF Commission on Education—Geneva, 1969

The LWF Commission on Education held a World Evaluation Conference in March 1969 on the theme "Christian Education in a Secular Society". Dr. Herbert G. Schaefer, Staff Secretary of the Commission, has documented for us the historical context out of which this Conference arose and describes briefly the Conference itself before seeking to draw some of the conclusions and ask the necessary questions.¹

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all the quotations are taken from the following Commission documents: *Geneva document*: World Evaluation Conference on "Christian Education in a Secular Society", Geneva, March 1969; *Carthage document*: Regional Consultation on "Christian Education in a Secular Society", Carthage College, Wisconsin, USA, July 1966; *Jerusalem document*: International Consultation on the theme of "Christian Education in a Secularised World", Jerusalem, May, 1965; *Oslo document*: Minutes of the Meeting of the Commission on Education, Oslo, Norway, June, 1964; *Preparatory document*: W. Kent Gilbert, "Partnership in Education" (background material for the Fifth Assembly). Copies of these documents are available in limited quantities from the office of the Commission on Education, Lutheran World Federation, 150 route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.

Rapid explosive change not limited to any one sphere of life but pervasive in all areas of human existence is today a universal phenomenon. No nation is immune, no society stable. Words that typify the late 1960's are explosive—crisis, revolution, coup de'état, protest, riot, reconstruction, demonstration, explosion! Each indicates movement and force—*movement* away from established traditions, concepts, practices, and answers, *force* as an impatience with the status quo, a rejection of revolutionary development and a demand for the new now. Explosions of population, of knowledge, of technology, of education, and of mass media are so related and interrelated both to each other and to the potential of society as to make change inevitable and almost unrestricted. The conquest of space and the resultant viewing of