

(Address given by the Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., President, University of Notre Dame, at the National Congress on Church-Related Colleges and Universities, Notre Dame, Indiana, June 21, 1979)

REFLECTIONS ON A CHURCH-RELATED UNIVERSITY

Before addressing my subject tonight, may I tell each of you how delighted I am to welcome you to Notre Dame. We have about 500 meetings a year at this University, but few that are more congenial to the reality of the place and the meaning of its history. You will enrich that history in the next two days and, for that, we of Notre Dame are all very grateful to each of you, to your churches, and to the hundreds of colleges and universities that you represent. We are also indebted to John Moseley and the Committee who worked so hard and so effectively to make this Congress a great success. We are all tonight present at the creation of a very important and meaningful new organization, one that would have been impossible only a few years ago. We may, therefore, be doubly delighted tonight -- for your presence, first of all, but also for the noble purposes that brought you here.

I have been asked to give a personal reflection on a church-related university. It will come as no surprise to any of you if most of my reflections bear on this institution which I entered as a student in 1934 and have served as a faculty member and administrator for the past thirty-four years.

May I begin by saying that I deeply believe in the validity of the church or faith-related institution of higher education. I do not say this lightly since, like many of you, I have spent the totality of

my adult life in one or another of these institutions, learning and teaching and administering. Many other concerns have filled my days and years, but the home base, the center, the mother house, as we say, has always been in a Catholic university. One goes out from here and returns here to be refreshed. This is the central reality that gives strength and validity to whatever else one does.

May I insist on this, since no less a personage than George Bernard Shaw has said that this kind of institution is a contradiction in terms. More contemporary authors have said essentially the same thing: that the church should never have entered higher education, or having entered, should get out.

I believe the very opposite of that, although I realize that one must justify one's convictions in the face of such strong adversaries. Most of what I have to say by way of personal reflection is a direct and indirect way of giving those ^{justifying} reasons as I see them.

It is an interesting fact that there was not any university for more than half of the Christian era, the first foundation being the University of Paris in 1204, soon enough followed by all the great early universities, Bologna, Pavia, Salamanca, Coimbra, Louvain, Oxford, Cambridge, and all the rest -- all founded by the Church, and all very much church-related, especially through their central and most important faculty, Theology, which was then called the Queen of the Sciences.

It was an intellectually exciting period of history, well characterized by the Latin adage: intellectus quaerens fidem and

fides quaerens intellectum. Intelligence seeking faith and faith seeking intelligence. The university is the home of the intellect. In that age of faith, the greatest intellectual quest in the university was for a greater understanding of what is believed by faith -- hence the great compendiums of theology and the centrality of that queenly science of theology. But besides the intellect seeking an understanding of the faith, faith itself needed and sought the ally of intellect lest faith degenerate into empty emotion, false piety, or irrational patterns of belief. Faith enlarges human intelligence, and human intelligence is the proper home for faith. We must have a mind to believe.

It is curious that although the Church was the mother of all the first universities, even the guarantor of their intellectual freedom, there soon enough came a day when all of them left the Church and were secularized, when theology was dethroned as queen and successively replaced by a series of other disciplines, the latest being physical science. The Church was elbowed out of that which it created, and that condition continued for many centuries. One very real purpose of this Congress is to see that this history of complete secularization of higher education does not repeat itself in America in our time.

It is perhaps most relevant to this Congress that our America saw the most important reversal of this historical ostracization of the Church from higher learning. What happened at the creation of universities in the Middle Ages happened again here in America, as early as 1636 when churchmen created Harvard, followed by Yale, Princeton, and all the others.

This time, it was the Protestant Churches that took the lead, since Protestants predominated in early America. There were only 25,000 Catholics here in 1776, most of them in Maryland.

In time, we Catholics followed your good example. This University was founded in 1842. Like most founders, ours was long on faith and vision, and short on resources, but he did label a log cabin in the Northern Indiana wilderness, L'Université de Notre Dame du Lac, just about five minutes after he arrived here with three hundred dollars and great dreams.

One might well wonder what would have happened to higher education in America without this leadership from the Churches. The fact is that, from Harvard's founding in 1636 until public education received its great new impetus from the Morrill Act of 1863, most American institutions of higher education were private and church-related. The Methodists alone founded such great present day universities as Boston and Duke (both of whose Presidents are here), Syracuse, Emory, Southern Methodist, Northwestern, Denver, and Southern California. I am proud to hold an honorary doctorate from four of these institutions, as well as some great Methodist-founded colleges such as Albion. American higher education would have been poor indeed without these valiant early efforts of such dedicated educational pioneers. It is an amazing fact that as late as the end of World War II, half of the students in American higher education were in private schools, mostly founded by these churchmen. While only a quarter of the students are in private schools today, this does not signal a diminution of effort

in the private religious sector as much as a phenomenal post-war growth of public education, mostly community colleges, responding to the new call for equality of educational opportunity.

One cannot speak of any single motivation in all of this church effort to found colleges and universities in America, a kind of Middle Age history repeating itself here in a new land. Someone has said that the Methodists did so much because it seemed a good thing to do and no one else was doing it. As to the Catholic effort of founding more colleges and universities here than in all the rest of the world together, one can say that it was done, not by the Bishops (except for The Catholic University in Washington), but by religious men and women's orders, mainly the Jesuits. The Catholic Bishops mainly restricted themselves to elementary and secondary education.

I suspect that having been driven out of higher education in Europe, founders like our Father Edward Sorin were astonished at the ease with which his fledgling Notre Dame was chartered by the State of Indiana, and moreover being given a fantastic charter written by a Methodist Senator. (No, I am not a crypto-Methodist, but I do greatly admire their educational activity, including writing our charter.)

Whatever one says about motivation for this unique religious background of American higher education, I am sure that it was

basically religious, as well as educational. The fact that ministers and priests and sisters were so intimately involved in the administration and faculties of these early institutions says something of the religious motivation involved. I doubt that anything else can explain the totality of their dedication, zeal, and sacrifice.

I should perhaps admit, sadly, at this point that much like the Medieval Catholic universities, many of the originally Protestant Church-related universities and colleges are no longer so related in any meaningful way, and there is much fear of basic secularization in Catholic colleges and universities, too. I believe that our very presence here together means that we together do not rejoice in the prospect of more secularization, even though in many former church-related institutions, the course of secularization is likely irreversible. Reflecting on my own institution, and I hope on most of yours, I find many reasons to reinvigorate our religious commitment and to declare it a matter of highest priority. Allow me to recount a few of these reasons.

If there is one concern that characterizes the post-Watergate, post-Vietnam reality of American higher education, it is concern about values. However much educators discuss this concern, it seems obvious to me at least that almost no one, including the most dedicated secular humanists, has managed to inculcate values in any meaningful way without the religious realities of faith in man as a child of God and follower of Christ, without prayer, without pondering our profound need of divine

grace if we are to transcend our innate selfishness and self-centeredness.

This evangelical faith is our truest legacy. We are called to transcend ourselves, to put on Christ, to aspire beyond time to eternal life, to love God with our whole heart and soul and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. If only we continue to do this as best we can, with God's help, this is the greatest education in values possible. In addition to our trying to do it, we should also talk about our ideal, especially in teaching Christian philosophy and theology, if the education we profess to give is to be essentially Christian. We can all honestly admit or confess that we do this badly, both what we practice and what we teach, but at least let us also admit that this practice and profession is central to our educational efforts, in fact the truest justification of the existence of our institutions. Also, this is our response to a very current concern among educators.

Let us not be bashful about what we have to offer. The secular humanists have nothing to match it -- especially if we commit ourselves anew to teach philosophy and theology better than we traditionally have done. The problem with most Christian educational institutions today is that they are too often bashfully and apologetically Christian. If we do not openly and enthusiastically discuss Christian values where they touch the various disciplines we teach, then where will this happen?

Let me illustrate this point. Several years ago, we at Notre Dame instituted a Committee on Priorities. The top priority that emerged was that we should deepen our Christian commitment to all those values that make the Christian life and learning worthwhile. Following this conclusion, we inaugurated a campaign for \$130 million dollars to enable ourselves to do it better. We did not, over the past three and a half years of this campaign, apologize to our constituency for this renewed and reinvigorated Christian value and faith commitment of the University. We underlined and emphasized it.

The result: a year and a half from the end of the campaign, we are already beyond our goal and quite assured that we will raise more than \$150 million, one year before the end of the five year campaign. As one who was deeply involved in this effort that has touched about a hundred thousand alumni, alumnae, parents and friends, may I say that I am more than ever convinced that all Christian institutions of higher learning should go and do likewise, if they want to survive as unique and much needed institutions in our times. More people than we imagine really want what we uniquely have to offer.

May I add one more observation in this particular reflection. We should stress excellence and competence just as much if not more than our secular and public counterparts. Piety is no substitute for competence and virtue is by ^{definition} ~~nature~~ excellence in all one does. But beyond competence, our institutions should also inculcate compassion and commitment in the service of others less fortunate. This should

be the quintessential concern of Christian education and if our graduates do not share this concern and manifest it in their lives, then somehow we have failed.

Another central concern of higher education today is liberal versus vocational education. It is not by chance that our institutions were born in the tradition of liberal arts while the public institutions were first characterized by agricultural and mechanical arts, following the Morrrell Act. This was good for America. We needed vocational education badly at that time and we need it today. Strangely, though, as the years passed, many of us deserted our truest heritage and sought vocationalism that drifted farther and farther from our tradition of the liberal learning. We were caught up in the process of teaching people how to do something, rather than how to be someone worthwhile.

I believe our graduates should certainly know to do something, but mainly how to think, write, and speak clearly, to evaluate, to situate themselves in this difficult world. They should also know how to do something specific, but not at the cost of these humanistic abilities that will enable them to grow, as humans and Christians, throughout their working days. This is a rapidly changing world in which no one can be educated to cope successfully, to prevail, not just to endure, without open supple minds and permanent value commitments. The last thing we should do is educate young people to spend their lives in a rut. Again, the liberal commitment is

part of our heritage that needs renewed and creative attention in our total educational effort as Christian institutions of higher learning.

It should follow from all of this that we and our graduates must be socially concerned. The churches share these concerns, and it is precisely within our institutions that the churches must do their thinking about the shape of the world emerging: the plight of a billion poor in the Fourth World, the pervading racism of our times, the abuse of wealth and power, the victimization of the weak, the curse of violence and war, the injustices that from all sides cry to heaven for vengeance. If peace is the work of justice, it is also needful of informed and competent programs, not the thoughtless actions of happy amateurs, no matter what their religious motivation. We have in our institutions all the disciplines bearing on competence and thoughtful answers to all these compelling human problems. One example: The Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, working with university scholars, did more, in launching the Green Revolution, to make poor farmers self-reliant to produce food to alleviate world hunger, than all of our well-meaning collections, involving much more money, to give food to the hungry. New genetic stocks of food grains were more important to the solution of hunger than admittedly charitable hand-outs over many centuries.

There is much more to be said, but I have gone on all too long and will conclude with one last point that should be mentioned in this context, even though briefly. A great concern of our times, equal to

the others I have mentioned, is the alienation and depersonalization so prevalent in modern life, especially among the young. If we learned one lesson during the recent student revolution it was that we have lost a sense of community. Again, what concept is more congenial to Christianity than the revolutionary concept that at the deepest level of human living, we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.

How can we recapture this reality within our colleges and universities? I make no apology for suggesting that beyond our daily love for one another, we manifest this community in prayer together, in the liturgical practices on our campuses. At the height of the Vietnam crisis, we held together on this campus because thousands of students and faculties celebrated Mass together, at all hours of the day and night, indoors and outdoors. These were the most meaningful moments we had during those difficult days. It was one bright light in the pervading darkness.

Enough of reflections. There is much work to be done and I am heartened that the days ahead will see us doing it together. May we be of good heart, do our work confidently, because it is also God's work and we are both enabled and enobled by His promise to be with us when we do it together in His name and for His Kingdom. May God bless our common efforts.

[1979]

NATIONAL CONGRESS ON CHURCH-RELATED COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' BY-LAWS

Article One

Election and Composition of the Board of Directors

The initial Board of Directors of the National Congress on Church-Related Colleges and Universities shall be elected by the Executives for Church-Related Higher Education. There shall be an initial Board of Directors of seven (7) members, and that initial Board shall have the authorization to expand to approximately twenty (20) members. Once completed, the Board of Directors shall have the right to replace Board members who resign or otherwise cannot serve.

Article Two

Responsibilities

The Board of Directors shall be charged with complete responsibility for a national congress and related cooperative programs and activities. Specifically, it shall be the responsibility of the Board of Directors:

- A. To operate a cooperative program for denominations and their colleges and universities.
- B. To hold a National Congress to process studies and dramatize the crisis and challenge of the church-related college.
- C. To resource the denominations and conduct follow-up activities on the Congress appropriate to the specific needs and plans of the denominations, colleges, and universities.
- D. To report and account to the Executives for Church-Related Higher Education the activities and results of the National Congress at the conclusion and to keep the Executives informed with regular progress reports.

Article Three

Power to Contract

The Board of Directors shall have the power to contract for leadership and program services with an educational institution or center which is non-profit and tax-exempt and which has a program and purposes consistent with those of the National Congress. The contracting authority includes that of financing the National Congress and related programs and resources through contributions and grants with the contracting institu-

tion or center serving as the fiscal agent. The Board of Directors may also make other contracts for services necessary in carrying out the Congress and related activities.

Article Four

Structure and Organization

Section 1. Officers

The initial officers shall be a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and Chairperson of the Executive Committee, three Vice-Chairpersons for Program, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The Board of Directors may name other officers as necessary.

Section 2. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson and Chairperson of the Executive Committee, the three Vice-Chairpersons for Program, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and any other Board member elected by the Board. It is the responsibility of the Executive Committee to act for the Board between Board meetings, to act on specific assignments of the Board, to advise the Executive Director, and generally to assist the Board in supervising the program of the National Congress.

Section 3. The Executive Director

The Executive Director shall be the chief executive and administrator of the Board and for the National Congress. He may take the necessary administrative actions under the policy and procedures of the Board of Directors. He provides the program coordination and leadership for the Study Commissions and various denominational activities. He makes the necessary arrangements for the program and contracts for services necessary in carrying out the program.

Section 4. The Committee for the National Congress

The Committee for the National Congress shall be a committee of outstanding men and women who believe in and will work for the church-related colleges and universities in the National Congress program. The membership shall be elected by the Board of Directors upon nominations from various sources, but especially that of the denominations. The purpose of the Committee shall be to help sponsor, gain understanding, and awaken the constituencies, churches, colleges, universities, and the public concerning the issues and the potential of church-related colleges and universities.

Article Five

The National Congress and the Cooperative Program with the
Churches and Church-Related Colleges and Universities

The Board of Directors is authorized to carry out the general approach of the program and the National Congress structure as outlined in a presentation dated September 22, 1978, and as adjusted and amended by the Board of Directors. This presentation shall serve as the basic program approach and authorization, and the Board of Directors carries responsibility for it, including approval of the general budget, operation, and policies involved in carrying out the National Congress and the cooperative program.

Article Six

Amendments .

The Board of Directors may amend these by-laws by a two-thirds vote.

[1979]

Question and Suggestion Sheet

- I. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of the Notre Dame meeting of the National Congress?
 - A. Plenary Sessions
 - B. Study Commission Work
 - C. Denominational Meetings
 - D. Resource and Information Exchange
- II. How can we help get people to think seriously about the issues and the future presented by the National Congress on Church-Related Colleges and Universities and make clear as well as the importance these issues have for the future of the church, higher education, and our society? (Through the churches, college, regional meetings, public media, other?)
- III. What can be done to make the February meeting of the National Congress a significant event and to help bring into perspective these problems and opportunities for ourselves and those developing church and college public policy?
- IV. What suggestions do you have for the development of strategies of action in the denominations, in the colleges, and in public policy?
- V. Do you have specific suggestions for personal or collective strategies for the National Committee or the National Congress between now and the February meeting or beyond?

I appreciate your participation and assistance in the National Committee. Please send your suggestions to me, and I will see that the leadership of the National Congress considers them in their planning and work.

Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C.
Chairman, National Committee
National Congress for Church-Related
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University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

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This is the message I have given at Thursday
night dinner. [1979]

Role of National Committee

We are facing critical issues and days ahead for the churches, the colleges, and universities as they relate to one another and as they serve society and are a part of the American higher education system. The National Committee is composed of over a hundred prominent men and women who care enough about the church and higher education to lend their time and influence to these important issues before the churches and their colleges and universities.

Specifically, this is the role of the National Committee:

First, it is to gain new insights and information concerning the changing conditions and issues of the church and their colleges and the implications this has for the future and for the values and goals of our society. (The National Congress, with its Study Commissions, denominational concerns, Resource and Information Exchange, Congress meeting is designed to assist the National Committee in this process of information and understanding).

Second, it is to assist in informing others and in creating interest in these issues and relationships on the part of your constituency groups and the general public.

Third, it is to utilize this understanding and one's influence in a proper manner with the churches and the colleges and to develop public policy to help create the kind of relationships, climate and support that will allow the church and the college to fulfill their opportunities to serve in the diverse systems of American higher education.

Fourth, it is to assist specifically the National Congress on Church-Related College and Universities in utilizing its opportunities to the best advantage to make an impact on the church and its colleges and on the public policy concerned with Christian values and a free society. The attached Questions and Suggestion Sheet will help be specific in thinking through these problems and opportunities.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 13, 1979

TO THE DELEGATES AT THE NATIONAL CONGRESS
ON CHURCH-RELATED COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES:

Our earliest institutions of higher learning in the United States were church-related, and the church-related colleges and universities still provide an important element in the educational spectrum of our Nation.

You convene today at one of our great church-related universities at a time when the future of some of our private institutions is in question. Yet many of our young people are desperately seeking meaning and purpose in their lives and educations, and many of our more mature citizens are seeking new opportunities and understanding. There is a great longing for a sense of commitment in an often impersonal society. They search for guidance in their efforts to find honesty, justice, human betterment and peace.

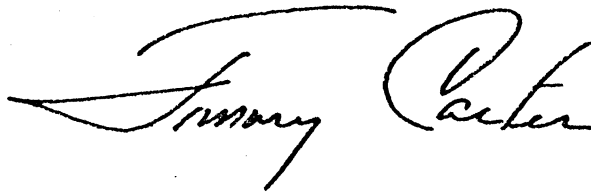
The church-related institutions, with all their diversity, have served to bring this sense of purpose and commitment to every generation of Americans, providing an opportunity for intellectual and spiritual growth as an essential part of the preparation for the responsibilities and challenges of life.

Violence, hatred and war still wound mankind. Poverty ravages the bodies and spirits of millions, even in the United States. Many of the world's people are persecuted for their beliefs, many are denied even basic literacy, many still lack the freedom to exercise their God-given human rights.

Colleges and universities have always represented a unique commitment to preserve all that was of value in the past and to transmit it to the young that they might build a better future for themselves as individuals and for their world. I do not believe the mission of the church-related college is completed. This Congress, with its various study commissions, seeks to address these challenges forthrightly, with a renewed commitment to the future. I wish you well in your deliberations.

In honoring the unique contribution of church-related colleges to the vigor and strength of our Nation, I must call upon you to strive even harder to uphold the intellectual, religious and humane values of your institutions. I believe you provide a needed response to the spiritual hunger of our day, and I wish you success as you seek out new paths in God's service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jimmy Carter". The signature is written in dark ink and is centered below the word "Sincerely,".