

June 15, 1973

PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS TOGETHER IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In Indiana, we have every variety of college and university. There are the great state universities, Indiana and Purdue, with their central and regional campuses, and about 31 private colleges, mainly of religious origin, and one large private university, Notre Dame.

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We have all worked together with great understanding and even affection over the years when the privates and the publics elsewhere were often engaged in unseemly combat. Even as federal monies became available to all of us, we divided it equitably and amiably, largely due to the leadership of Herman Wells, longtime President of Indiana University at Bloomington. He called me one day and asked: "Would it bother you, Ted, if we were to establish a regional branch in South Bend? If you say no, we won't do it." I said, "It's a great idea, Herman. There are all kinds of students in this area who don't have either the funds or the inclination to attend Notre Dame or Saint Mary's." The South Bend branch is a great school today, with about 6,000 students. Notre Dame and Saint Mary's are also larger than ever.

Many of the founding religious bodies, over the years, have been much less cordial and friendly to each other than the schools they founded. Thus it required a large measure of courage for Bob Reardon, President of the Fundamentalist Church of God's Anderson College, to invite me to give the baccalaureate at a time when over 6,000 of his co-religionists were having their annual tent revival meeting (now mostly campers and trailers!)

I was touched by this ecumenical gesture, following an earlier one at Manchester College where I went four hours without a cigarette in the days when I was smoking them (too much). Other parts of the country are changing, too. This past year, I was the first Catholic priest to give the baccalaureate at two distinguished institutions, both founded more than two centuries ago by Presbyterians, Princeton and Dickinson. The same last year at Davidson where Woodrow Wilson and Dean Rusk matriculated.

I was even more touched when all 6,000+ showed up for the baccalaureate. The only larger group I ever addressed this way (outside of Notre Dame) was at Utah State University where the Mormons came in great numbers and listened so intently that I went on twice as long as I had intended.

Two notes of interest. The two students mentioned in the talk are still great fellows. The one unnamed studied medicine at Harvard and was, on Dean Ebert's testimony, one of the best students they had. He is a great doctor today. I just heard from him in Indonesia. Jim Lynch is still playing football, well, I am told, and I think in Kansas City. He is a great alumnus, back for all the reunions, and a good Christian, too.

The priest mentioned, Father Bill Cunningham, should have died of diabetes in the early twenties, but they discovered insulin. He was one of the first insulin human guinea pigs. It worked. I went to visit him in our campus infirmary a week before he died. We both

knew the timetable. When I arrived, he was sitting in the sun, in front of the infirmary, with a stack of Saturday Reviews of Literature on the grass beside his reclining chair. "What are you reading, Bill?" I asked, curious about what a man might be reading a week before his certain death. "It's this new math, Ted. I've never understood it and the Saturday Review has just run a series on it. I've waited until the series was finished, and now I'm reading it all at once to find out what's happening in mathematics."

He was that kind of man. He would have been very much at home, and was earlier very helpful at Anderson College, even if he could not smoke his pipe, as is recounted here.