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SOME THINGS LEARNED THROUGH
LONG EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD OF CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION

Henry L. McCrorey
President, Johnson C. Smith University

In the providence of God, I have been blessed with a long tenure of service in the field of Christian Education as teacher and administrator in one institution; the time, to be exact, will be 46 years in May of this year. I served the first twelve years of this period as teacher and the other thirty four as president.

The period I served as teacher afforded me splendid opportunity to study students, their reaction to education while in school and the use made of their education after graduation. As president, I have had unusual opportunity to observe teachers as to character, methods of teaching, discipline, et cetera. In short, this lengthy experience in the field of Christian Education has enriched my knowledge in that field.

In this paper it is our purpose to give our conception of Christian Education, its objectives and a bit of our long experience as college teacher and administrator in efforts to achieve these objectives.

I have learned that education is power for good or evil depending on its kind and the use made of it. The awful results of the wrong use made of education is a challenge to the Christian or church-related college whose purpose is the training of men and women for intelligent, useful Christian living and service.

There are at least two kinds of education. The one is simply informational and factual. The other in addition to being informational and factual is moral and spiritual. The first has to do simply with training of the mind, the latter with the development of the entire personality, body, mind and soul. In other words, the first is unbalanced and incomplete. All education without moral and spiritual values is unbalanced and incomplete.

I have learned that one does not get the true conception of education until he comes to realize that it is not an end in itself but a means to an end and that the end is the glory of God and the good of mankind. The duty of the Christian college is to direct the power of education into channels leading to these objectives. When education is not thus directed its results are harmful. Due to misdirected education, crime seems to increase as education advances. Notwithstanding the great advance of education, the annual crime bill of this nation is more than three times the cost of maintaining the federal government. This is due not so much to a lack of education as it is to the wrong use of it.

In my judgment, Christian educated youth are one of a nation's most valuable assets. To this group of to-day the world must look for Christian leadership of to-morrow.

Fichte, the German philosopher, says, "What you would have in the state, you must put into the children through the schools." This in the long run is the most effective way of moulding the thinking and

developing attitudes in the state and should be followed by those who would have in the state a people who love God and keep His commandments, but not otherwise. Such would be dangerous if the things desired to be in the state should not be for the good of the citizens. I fear that the Germans are guilty of this.

Since the students of to-day are to be the leaders of to-morrow, our colleges should offer only that kind of training as will develop them into the highest type of citizenship possible, mentally, morally and spiritually. If we would promote peace in the state and the world, let us put the spirit of peace in our children through our schools. This is the way to secure real lasting peace. Lasting peace must be achieved from within. Peace brought about by the sword is not real peace and as such will not last. The cessation of hostilities by this method lasts only for a time, for the warring spirit still remains in the heart of the victim and will express itself outwardly again at an opportune time.

The church has organized schools and colleges for the purpose of developing intelligent Christian manhood and womanhood through Christian education to guide aright those in need of educational, moral and spiritual guidance. Due to the lack of the guiding principles of the spirit of Christ through education, tragedy results from much of the education offered the youth of to-day, so that instead of being an asset to the nation it is a liability. My experience has taught me that education is either useful, useless or dangerous. The business of the college is not only to offer factual instruction to students but should at the same time inspire them to make their education useful to society.

It is true, this is a materialistic age, and as such education is often over commercialized. The primary purpose of true education is not to make the world richer, but better morally and spiritually. That philosophy of life by which one justifies himself in getting all he possibly can out of life without putting something worthwhile into life is a false philosophy. It is a selfish motive by which one is prompted to get all he can and to can all he gets.

I have learned in advising students in the selection of their college work that frequently they will give as their reason for choosing a certain course of study, that this work when completed will guarantee a larger income financially than some other work. Very often service values are entirely disregarded in making the choice.

To have a Christian college you must have Christian teachers; teachers who have sat at the feet of the greatest of all teachers, our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. To secure teachers qualified both spiritually and scholastically has not been for me an easy task. Some years ago in an effort to secure standard college rating for Johnson C. Smith University, I set out to get teachers who would meet the requirement of the rating Association from the standpoint of scholarship. I had to get such teachers from state graduate schools but soon I found that it was a very difficult task to find teachers among graduates of these institutions who would fit into our work spiritually. So I adopted a plan of granting to those teachers of ability whom I had found to be qualified morally and spiritually but deficient in scholarship, leave to do advanced work with the understanding that they would resume their work in

the institution after having completed their advanced studies. This was a slow process since we could release only one or two a year, yet we found this method well worth the time and inconvenience required, for I succeeded in this way in building a very capable faculty.

I consider the problem of securing for our church-related colleges teachers adequately prepared both educationally and spiritually, one of the most serious problems with which these institutions have to deal.

In view of the fact of the discontinuance of almost all of our parochial and church secondary schools, and the scarcity of church graduate schools, thus in most instances leaving only four years of educational training to be given by our church educational institutions, I would recommend that as early and as far as possible more graduate U. S. A. Presbyterian institutions be established and supported with the aid of the church that our youth may have an opportunity to complete their education for teaching, Christian leadership, et cetera in our church-related institutions.

Of necessity, I have had to learn how to run a college on a small income. Most of us college presidents, I presume, have had to do likewise.

As a college president, I soon learned that to succeed on a small available income every dollar had to be used to the best advantage possible, and that it was necessary to operate within the limits of the budget however small it might be. As a result our institution has closed every year without a deficit, the past ten years not excepted.

In making an address in 1921 at a meeting of the Women's Presbyterian of Pittsburgh, Penna., in the interest of Johnson C. Smith University to replace a building that had recently burned, I remarked that for 50 years the institution had been required to make bricks without straws. I then went on to tell how many tales of high quality bricks the institution had moulded and put on the market under such circumstances during the fifty years of its existence. The result was that a wealthy woman of Pittsburgh, Mrs. Johnson C. Smith by name, donated to the institution over a period of eight years a sum sufficiently large to justify the trustees of the college, as a matter of appreciation, in changing its name to that of the donor.

This gift was soon followed by a still larger one from Mr. James B. Duke, a wealthy citizen of Charlotte, N. C., the city in which the institution is located. When the administration of the institution was committed to our trust 34 years ago, the estimated value of the plant was \$200,000; to-day it is over \$1,000,000. The endowment was \$80,000; to-day it is \$1,750,000.

In 1933 the institution, which had been operated 54 years for men only, was made co-educational. This was done since up to that time there was no Presbyterian educational institution in the southern states where colored Presbyterian women could get a college education. We realized that these Presbyterian women having to go to institutions of other denominations for college work meant that the majority of them would probably be lost to the Presbyterian Church.

Having no dormitory for women students when the institution was made co-educational, temporary arrangements were made to receive women in the upper two years only until a dormitory could be provided. Since

then, funds have been raised and a large modern dormitory has been erected and is being occupied this year for the first time.

Having discovered how greatly the church at large was handicapped in its work for lack of properly trained lay-leadership, steps were taken by Johnson C. Smith University to provide opportunity for organized church activities for students. A church building was erected and a regularly constituted church was organized through the Presbytery within whose bounds the university is located, the membership being composed of teachers and students. The church is Presbyterian and the work of the church is organized according to the program of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The University church contributes to all of the Boards of the Church and reports to the General Assembly through the Presbytery within whose bounds it is located.

This active experience in church work prepares the student members to enter effectively into the work of the church wherever they are located after graduation.

The University church building is so located that it is the first building reached on entering the school campus thus indicating where the chief interest of the work centers.

At the close of the dedicatory service of the church building, an opportunity was given to the members of the faculty who might wish to do so, to sign voluntarily the following declaration of faith:

"We, the members of the faculty of Johnson C. Smith University, desire at this time to re-affirm our faith in the Bible as the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice; our faith in the Church of the living God, by whose ministry the world is to be brought to the foot of the cross; our faith in Jesus Christ as the only and well loved Son of God the Father.

"We also desire to pledge our loyalty and obedience to the rules and ideals of Johnson C. Smith University as revealed in the history of the institution." One hundred per cent of the faculty voluntarily signed the pledge.

In order to make sure that students who enter Johnson C. Smith University from year to year may realize at the beginning of their college career the purpose of the institution, we inform the new students and remind the others at the beginning of each year that the school is more than a filling station, that it is a service station and that the benefit derived from the service rendered to them by the institution is expected to be passed on by them in life to others after graduation. We further remind them that education is a trust to be used in the interests of others, and as such it increases one's responsibility to society.

I hold that education is not worthwhile that is not translated into the development of better and more capable men and women. It is my conviction that a person, regardless of his education, wealth or position is no greater than he is good, and no stronger than the strength of his character. I have also learned the great significant value of the personal touch of teacher and student in the process of teaching such as is experienced in a small college, in a way that is not possible in a large institution.

I have also learned that most effective work of teachers may be done outside of the classroom and apart from books. More than a half century ago while attending a small mission school in South Carolina whose faculty consisted of a northern white man, his daughter and one other, the daughter

on one occasion between class periods asked what I intended to do with my education. I readily replied to make a living. She said that I should not use my education simply to help myself, but more especially to help others. She then explained that Christ came into the world, lived, suffered and died to help others and that I was one of the others, and that I should use my education to help other people. This was a vital experience in my life. Taking this teacher at her word, my purpose in life was changed and fixed and my course determined from that date, and from which, by the grace of God, I have never departed.

About forty years ago, as a teacher, I had a serious conference with one of my students, a young man whom I had discovered as having the wrong idea of education. As a result of this conference, that young man saw education in a new light. He studied for the Christian ministry and after graduation in the college and theological seminary, he and his wife, who was also a graduate of a church-related school, went into a backward county in the state of Georgia where there were no Presbyterians. Here he erected a small church building and a school house. And there in the midst of dense ignorance, superstition and vice, he began a work which in a period of thirty years revolutionized that entire county. This good man and his wife passed to their heavenly reward a few years ago leaving a church of over 200 members, a large mission school, and three mission churches as a result of their labors.

Nine of our theological students engaging in religious activities in the states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Virginia during the summer months of 1940, preached 200 sermons; added 125 to young peoples' societies, 300 to Sunday Schools; conducted 20 church vacation schools, made 1,415 pastoral calls; added 65 to church membership; organized 2 Sabbath schools, with a membership of 65, 3 young peoples' societies, and 4 boys' clubs; conducted four adult Bible classes and 2 leadership training courses. Four of these students conducted 6 evangelistic services at which 47 confessions were made.

The foregoing is an answer to the question, "Is the church-related college worthwhile, and does Christian education pay".

The latest forward step of the institution was made two years ago when the institution became independent of the Board of National Missions, that is, assumed self support. Having been aided by the Missionary Board three score years and ten, we felt that it was time to relieve the Board of the responsibility of further aid to the institution. When this was done, some one remarked to me, "Well, you have come out from the Missionary Board to sink or swim, have you?" I replied, "No, we have come out not to sink but to swim, God being our helper."

The institution, which is now a corporation, is affiliated with the Board of Christian Education and will report to the General Assembly through that Board.