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# Religion on the Campus: A Need and An Inadequate Response

by

James A. Eaton

During the past school year, these frightening lines appeared in an issue of the Savannah State College student publication:

Students appear to have lost all hold of self-control and temperance. Onrushing impulses and passions are driving them unbalanced and unchecked in moral judgment and conduct. There is a tendency to engage in certain experiences mainly for pleasure and satisfaction. Intemperance, fury, drunkenness, and violence are moral disasters that are happening on our campus . . . Perhaps what we need as college students is a philosophy of life which would guide us in our daily living. . . .<sup>1</sup>

This "cry in the wilderness" by a student, who was obviously disturbed by what she saw happening to her peers, is closely akin to another statement by another student a few years ago. Perhaps his was a more sophisticated cry, but one can see that the plea is essentially the same:

. . . As I see it we are a generation with very little to live for except having children, monetary security, and the tenuous hope that we won't be suddenly blown to oblivion. This is not enough for me. I can't go through life quip-swapping at insane parties where people can only enjoy themselves if they get drunk, and studiously avoid anything that approaches serious conversation. . . .

It is an idea we are missing. It is an ideal we need.<sup>2</sup>

From where is to come this "philosophy of life which would guide us in daily living", this "ideal we need"? By now it should be obvious that neither of these is to be found in test tubes nor mathematical formulas nor electronic computers. This philosophy, this ideal is a spiritual need; if it is to be responded to adequately, it must come from a source that will lead toward spiritual growth and maturity. One such source, indeed, the greatest source, is religion. And while interest in religion and the study of religion might be flourishing on some college campuses, on many others religion is fast becoming *passé*.

Why is there to be found on many campuses this vacuum of spiritual life, or religious emphasis? Where has religion and its emphasis on morals and ideals gone? Why has religion become so unimportant among so many college students?

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<sup>1</sup>Gwendolyn Buchanan, "Degraded Morals", *The Tiger's Roar* (April-May, 1964), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>John Aigner, "Beat Generation", *Observation Post* (March 20, 1958), p. 3.

Surely the cause is not historical. It is quite possible that many people fail to realize that in spite of a struggle for survival, there has never been a time when the campus has been completely devoid of religious influence, not even in the state-supported colleges and universities. As Eddy points out, even the state-controlled colleges and universities founded before 1860 were religious either in structure or control.<sup>3</sup> Thomas Jefferson, the founder of public-sponsored higher education, had certainly intended for his university to be free from sectarian control, but it was not his purpose to divorce religion from education. Shedd reports Jefferson's feelings to be these:

He (Jefferson) proposed that religion be taught as it is in-hered in other parts of the curriculum and that "different sects" be encouraged "to establish each for itself, a professorship of their own tenents, on the confines of the universtiy, so near that their students may attend the lectures there and have free use of our library, and other accommodations we can give them, pre-serving, however, their independence of us and of each other."<sup>4</sup>

Jefferson's policy was not universally adopted as the new state schools came into existence, but it is clearly evident that even when religion had no formal place in the curriculum, religious influence was often represented by appointments to the controlling boards of the schools (the University of South Carolina was one such example) or religious influence was felt by the use of hymns and prayers at assembly programs.

Many state schools continue to have some form of chapel service. It is interesting to note that it has been a pattern for state colleges for Negroes to have college sponsored religious services, usually with required attendance, from the very beginning of their existence.

McKinney makes the following comment in regard to compulsory religious services:

In general, the state colleges for Negroes have been able to emphasize much more than the other state institutions, primarily because of the religious homogeneity of their constituency . . . . A second factor which has enabled the Negro state college to present much more of a religious program than other state schools is one that is difficult to document but is generally conceded. This is that those who control the distribution of funds to Negro colleges in many cases are inclined to allow greater freedom in religious activities in accordance with the view that religion may be "a good and safe thing" for the Negro to have.<sup>5</sup>

Could the present lack of interest in religion on some state college

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<sup>3</sup>Edward D. Eddy, Jr., *College for Our Land and Time* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1956), p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>Clarence P. Shedd, *The Church Follows Its Students* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), p. 2.

<sup>5</sup>Richard T. McKinney, *Religion in Higher Education Among Negroes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945), p. 87.

campuses be a reaction against such a belief as this by students and faculty of some Negro colleges? If this is the case, there is no need for reacting against "special treatment." As time passed, many educators at state institutions all over the country began to feel the effects of a state university training which gave no opportunity to study religion. They felt that something was missing and that education without the rich cultural field of religion was something less than education should be. In an effort to meet this need, many state universities began to search for a method of bringing the influence of religion to their campuses. Their methods varied, but generally the YMCA, the YWCA and the Student Volunteer Movement found places on these campuses. As the years continued to come and go, these organizations were supplemented by denominational student pastorates, denominational foundations, schools of religion, and, finally, by college and university sponsored programs of religion.

A study by the University of Minnesota of the practices of land-grant colleges and state universities affecting religious matters, reported in 1952, revealed quite vividly the responsibilities that these schools have undertaken for a program of religion. Of the seventy-five schools which responded to their survey, it was found that space for business and social meetings of religious groups was provided by all but two of these schools, which excluded these groups, and seven, which made no provision for such. Only thirteen did not provide space for prayer or worship. Forty-three provided office and worship facilities for outside denominations to hold services on the campus. Thirty-five schools provided opportunities for religious counselors, while thirty schools did not. Perhaps most unexpectedly, twenty-two reported university ownership of chapels or other meeting places designed or designated especially for religious services; fourteen of these were supported by state funds. Fifty-eight schools recognized in some official manner a designated individual or individuals as having responsibility for this area of campus life. Fifty-eight schools indicated university-sponsored special convocations were held, emphasizing religious subjects, especially during religious emphasis week.<sup>6</sup>

Historically, then, the university and the college, even state supported colleges, have been connected closely or loosely with religion as Americans view religion. Why, then, is the religious vacuum felt on some campuses? Surely it cannot be that there is no felt need for the values of religion, nor is there a general agreement that religion as an academic discipline has no place in higher education.

Because students have made such comments as made in the two introductory remarks to this paper, and because there is evidence that there is something lacking in an education that totally excludes religion, many modern educators have become concerned about finding ways of integrating the values of religion with the total edu-

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<sup>6</sup>Henry E. Allen, "Practices of Land-Grant Colleges and State Universities Affecting Religious Matters", *School and Society*, Vol. 76 (December 6, 1952), 261 - 262.

cational experience of the student. There is much evidence that more attention should be given to this problem. Experiences seem to prove the truth of a statement once made by Nathan M. Pusey, President of Harvard University: “. . . Because a university is non-sectarian, it need not—indeed some of us believe it cannot to its peril—go further and eschew religion altogether.”<sup>7</sup> The expression of a need for the values of religion, such as those mentioned at the beginning of this paper, is sufficient reason for the college to make definite steps toward an adequate response to that need.

Perhaps there is a greater reason for the college to become more concerned. Nels Ferre is among those educators who believe that the college's objective must be to “train spirit, mind and body . . .” “Modern education has material mastery,” he continues, “and enormous intellectual information; what is most needed is adequate training of the life of the spirit.”<sup>8</sup> His characterization of modern man explains why this is necessary:

Modern man is too hollow; instead of being a person he is a nodule . . . . He is afraid to be long alone; he dreads self-examination, or the serious searching of the meanings and satisfactions of his own life. Somehow education must mean the continual enrichment of the inner man; the accumulation of spiritual resources; the deepening of personal meanings; the vitalization of individuality.<sup>9</sup>

An even more dogmatic point of view is represented by Boyer, who believes that it is of prime importance that students acquire skill in “the use of religious intelligence” and that it is the obligation of the college to provide opportunities for the developing of this skill.

It (the liberal arts college) has for its major task the fitting of young individuals to live in society. The creative mental attitudes of the students should have full opportunity to assimilate the spiritual possessions of the race. The ultimate test of the educational process in a democracy is its ability to develop every realizable power and purpose within the personality of the individual. The vital experiences of college youth should have meaning in terms of their relationship to society. Every known value that functions to build the “more abundant life” in the student has its place in the basic material used in the teaching process.<sup>10</sup>

In view of the historical connections of college with religion, in view of the present practices of many state-controlled colleges and universities, must the need for the values and wisdom of religion go unmet or inadequately met on the college campus? It is the opinion

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<sup>7</sup>Baccalaureate Address, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, June, 1957.

<sup>8</sup>Nels Ferre, *Christian Faith and Higher Education*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), p. 244.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>10</sup>Edward S. Boyer, *Religion in The American College*, (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1930), p. 14.

of this writer that the answer should be a resounding "No!" The faculty and administration of each college should feel an obligation to adopt a vital, genuine program of making available to the student body—as well as the faculty and administration—the values of religion (or religious intelligence, if one prefers that phrase.)

What would that program include? First, it would include courses for credit in the history, philosophy and psychology of religion. This is no novelty. Shedd states that "in more than two-thirds of our state universities and land-grant colleges, through departments or affiliated schools of religion, instruction in religion for academic credit is available to students."<sup>11</sup> There is no good reason why all or at least one of these courses cannot be available for credit in each college.

A second feature of a recommended program to help meet the need for religion on the campus is a year-round program geared toward making the student think. Commenting upon a Religion in Life Week once held at Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, a student made this remark: "Religion in Life Week is causing me to think—and I don't want to think." And yet, if this needed philosophy of life, this missing ideal is to be realized, those having the need must think. If the spiritual lives of the campus population are to be nourished to maturity, opportunities must be created which will lead them to do serious thinking. For as Meland states, "the nature of the thinking which pervades the college or university is, in the last analysis, the most formative factor in determining expression."<sup>12</sup> This "thinking" will be motivated not only by the classes in religion, but by provocative worship services, group meetings, discussion groups, religious emphasis weeks, bull sessions, etc.

A third—and more difficult to attain—goal of the religious program on the campus will be an attempt to make the entire atmosphere or *ethos* of the campus more conducive to spiritual growth. Administrators, faculty and student personnel workers have not given half as much attention to the effect of the college "atmosphere" on the personality of the student as should be given. It is amazing how some of them go about the conducting of their business with the most inhumane attitudes and behavior both toward their colleagues and their students, literally charging the very air with hostility and meanness; and yet, these very same people expect to produce a crop of spiritual giants, effervescent with love and charity and democratic ideals. It is not amazing that the students who live and breathe and have their being in such an atmosphere depart from it just as poverty stricken in spiritual values as their mentors are:

To reach the needed quality of spiritual *ethos* on the campus, there must be more than singing a hymn in assembly, having an occasional church service, and having an annual religious emphasis week. It

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<sup>11</sup>Clarence P. Shedd, "Religion in Higher Education Retrospect and Prospect;" *The Christian Scholar* (December, 1955), p. 17.

<sup>12</sup>Bernard E. Meland, "*Higher Education and the Human Spirit*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 21.

must even go beyond the level of establishing courses in religion. It must reach what Meland refers to as a more basic level of interest in spiritual growth:

A more basic level of interest in the spiritual emphasis of higher education is indicated when an administrator acknowledges that the educational process itself should be expressive of fundamental motives and creative of a concern with values.<sup>13</sup>

To make this type of realization into a reality will not be easy on most college campuses. On the other hand, if such a goal is greatly desired, it can be accomplished.

The final consideration for an adequate religious program on the campus would be an insistence that the program be basically a students' program. Arbuckle summarizes the aims of student involvement by stating that the religious program should allow the student "to enjoy the fellowship of students and faculty who have found some meaning in religion. It should give him an opportunity to participate in various activities that are religiously oriented. It should provide him an opportunity to worship and to meditate. It should help him to find answers to individual religious problems and to work out a way of living the good life."<sup>14</sup> If such a meaningful involvement is to be found, then the religious program must be well-planned to provide this involvement to as many persons as possible.

The conclusion to this whole matter seems to be the answer the college would give to this question: "What kind of people do we want our college to produce?" If the college is unconcerned about the spiritual needs or the moral growth of its students, then it can continue to ignore or simply give lip-service to religion in higher education. But in doing so, the college should be prepared to take the responsibility for the ill effects brought on by this act of inadequate response to a known need. On the other hand, if the college believes that it has an obligation to help fashion in the student a mature, integrated personality, then the college must put forth serious effort to aid in this process. This is a spiritual need and the process of meeting it is inward and spiritual. It can be aided by providing courses in religion, by providing opportunities for religious experiences of significance and depth, by providing an atmosphere on the campus where the spiritual becomes integrated with the learning process, and by providing meaningful involvement in the religious program to make possible the practical application of religious intelligence to the everyday problems of living. Such a program as this will present a challenge to anybody who decides to attempt to implement it. Yet, as we look beyond the spiritual coldness of the test tube and the electronic computer, we see the beckoning warmth of greater attention to the spirits of mankind. What greater frontier of educational practices can there be than to find an adequate response to the spiritual needs of the students who attend our colleges?

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<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>14</sup>Dugald S. Arbuckle, *Student Personnel Services in Higher Education*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1953) P. 181.

# Senior Majors and Their Ratings On the NTE and TEEP

by

James A. Eaton

The concern of the Savannah State College faculty with achievement approaching the state of excellence might well be centered upon the performance of the college's seniors on two standardized tests taken during the 1963-1964 school term—The National Teachers Examination and the Teacher Education Examination. While these tests deal specifically with the work of the teacher education majors, they yield some interesting reflections on how well the students are grasping the work within their major areas in comparison to other persons who have taken the tests and who have similar major areas.

The National Teachers Examinations (NTE and the Teacher Education Examination Program (TEEP)) are both sponsored by the Educational Testing Service with the general idea of evaluating the general professional preparation and the teaching field optional preparation of teachers or seniors in the teaching curriculum. TEEP is the newer of the two and it is designed specifically for seniors, although the NTE has been used and is still being used by many colleges to evaluate their seniors' weaknesses and strengths. This year, Savannah State College had as "either/or" provision on the tests, but beginning next year, all students in the teaching curriculum will be required to take the TEEP as a senior comprehensive examination.

While this report will deal only with the results within the majors or teaching fields area, it might be worthwhile first to take a brief look at the performance of this year's seniors on the General Professional Examinations of the NTE and the TEEP.

On the General or Commons Examination of the NTE, the fifty-three students taking it had a mean score of 429.88, with a range in scores from 328 to 537. According to ETS, approximately half of the people taking the test scored between 545 and 655; one quarter score above 655 and one quarter, below 545. The national mean score is given as 600. Seven of the seniors scored 500 or above, none made 600, and the highest score was 29.4 national percentile ranking.

On the TEEP General Professional Examination, there is no total score as on the NTE. Consequently, to approximate a similar score, an average of the mean scores set by the test makers to give some idea of the comparative ranking. The average mean of the local group was 14.08 as compared to the national mean of 20.08. This is approximately in the 37th percentile ranking—higher than the percentile ranking on the NTE. Four or 18.18% of the seniors taking the TEEP made total scores as high as or higher than the national mean. Consequently it is apparent that the students taking

the TEEP tended to make a better showing than did those taking the NTE.

Looking at the major concern of this report, the comparative scores in the major teaching fields, one finds variations in what was accomplished. By comparing national percentile rankings, one can see that business education and mathematics majors who took the TEEP made better scores than they did on the NTE. On the other hand, elementary education majors and English majors taking the NTE did remarkably better than those taking the TEEP. There was no substantial difference in the performance of physical education and social studies majors on the two tests. (see table #1)

**Table No. 1—Mean Percentile Ratings on NTE and TEEP, 1963**

Major Areas	NTE			TEEP		
	Mean	Range	No.	Mean	Range	No.
Art Education	3.0	3.0	1	none		
Business Education	15.86	9-28	7	22.75	3-425	2
Elementary Education	14.29	3-28	14	5.72	1-13.50	9
English	9.33	3-16	6	1.0	1.0	1
Gen. Sc., Biology Concentrate	16.38	3-42	8	N.S.*		
Phy. Sc., Con- centrate	2.0	3.0	1	none		
Industrial Arts	22.0	4-34	3	none		
Physical Education	3.0	3.0	1	2.0	2.0	1
Mathematics	4.83	1-14	6	10.88	1-22	4
Social Studies	7.57	1-13	7	7.13	1-13	4

\*No national norms available.

This table indicates some other rather sobering facts. Percentile-wise, on the NTE, the highest mean score (in Industrial Arts) was in the 22nd percentile, although the range of scores in that area was from 4 to 34 percentile. The highest mean on the TEEP was also in the 22nd percentile, but they were in the area of business education. Excepting the 3 to 42 range in biology (made by non-teaching biology majors), all of the percentile means and ranges, excluding those previously mentioned, were painfully low on the percentile scale. Some fields are lower than others, but there is not too much "to shout about" in any area.

The "why" behind these scores is something that deserves consideration. It can be assumed that no single factor can reveal that "why." Obviously, many combinations of factors exist involving the students, the teachers, the college atmosphere, the campus and city living conditions, the general motivational factors of the culture, etc. Because so many factors are involved, it might seem easier to forget the poor performance the students are making and to continue with "business as usual." But in view of the imperatives of our age, in view of the certain stiff competition the graduates of the College will face, does it not seem mandatory that some serious research efforts be made to determine not only why the students perform as they do on these tests but to attempt to improve their performance?