

CREDO OF A COLLEGE PRESIDENT

I believe in the small college, the residential college, and coeducation. If I didn't, I obviously ought not to be here! No doubt my convictions are in some sense the natural consequence of my own experience, but the values implicit in this kind of institution are visible for those with eyes to see. Let me be quite clear. There are many kinds of educational institutions, large as well as small, municipal as well as rural, technical as well as general, universities in distinction from colleges. They all have their place, and I am not trying to make invidious judgments of ultimate worth. One type is better than another only for the particular purpose it seeks to achieve, and it is my conviction that the small college where students and faculty can know one another, where both young men and young women can grow up together, and where their social life as well as academic interests are influenced by a common residential setting, is especially well designed to produce members of society distinguished for both their intellect and their character.

I believe in what is commonly called a liberal education. Once again let me insist that I do not believe there is only one academic route to the Kingdom of Heaven, and in an

increasingly scientific and technological society there must be provision for the training of technicians. The more complex our society becomes, however, the greater our need for men and women who have been illumined and disciplined by the liberal arts. If civilization is to survive in this perilous century, it will be because enough people can see the issues in the perspective of human history and human destiny; and unless we can preserve some sensitivity to the rich dimensions of human experience, it will not matter whether we survive or not. I have no quick and easy formula for distinguishing between the liberal and the vocational. I prefer the phrase *the liberating arts*, for it emphasizes the importance of the spirit of approach rather than the nature of the subject matter.

I believe in intellectual excellence. The college is a place for the development and discipline of the mind. This is its primary reason for being. This is not a unique assignment, since the college builds on years of schooling and is today increasingly succeeded by years of graduate and professional study. Furthermore, anyone familiar with the artist in the process of creation, the mechanic wrestling with a technical problem, or the businessman dealing with problems of competition is aware that most intellectual development occurs outside formal education. Nevertheless, the four years of undergraduate education, falling generally between the ages of 17 and 22, are becoming increasingly important in our society, and therefore are becoming increasingly sought after.

Because this phase of education has become so popular and because high school graduates in increasing and overwhelming numbers are seeking admission to colleges and universities, post high school education has proliferated in all directions. For the most part, this is good. It has

encouraged the development of institutions with different educational programs, for students with different interests and abilities, operating at different intellectual levels. Some confusion and disappointment have resulted from the failure of parents — and indeed of the institutions themselves — to recognize these differences and to respect the fact that one man's education may be another man's poison. A college cannot be all things to all people, and the intelligent father, perchance an alumnus, accepts the biological fact that his children may not be like him and may need a different kind of education for their satisfactory development.

I believe in the vocation of teaching. It is an exacting and rewarding occupation. To teach well one must be a scholar, or at least one must be imbued with the scholar's attitude and endowed with the scholar's capacity. How can one hope to kindle the imagination of students if one's own has never caught fire? How sharpen the minds of students if one's own has not been honed to a fine edge? A college which wants good teachers must provide the conditions under which good teaching can be maintained. Those conditions include such things as teaching load, leaves of absence, research facilities, and an atmosphere of encouragement for scholarly work.

For the small liberal arts college the teaching profession contains two dangerous extremes. One is the man who shuns scholarship on the alleged ground that he is a teacher pure and simple. He usually ends up more simple than pure. There are good teachers who are not productive scholars, to use the jargon of the profession, but they are not common. The other is the scholar for whom teaching is simply a necessary evil, the price one pays for roof and groceries and the opportunity to concentrate one's real energies and interests on the exploration of the unknown and the dis-

covery of new knowledge. Both types end up as amiable bores, the first because he has too little to communicate, the second because he cares too little about communication.

It is impossible to define great teaching. It can be pointed out or better yet experienced. And once it has been experienced there is no mistaking it or forgetting it. It is a form of communication which will cast a light down the years of a man's lifetime. It is an infection of the spirit which ends in a sense of challenge and excitement. Carleton has been especially blessed with teachers who have believed in the importance of teaching. I hope it will always be so, for no college can be better than those who carry the burden of its work.

PROBLEMS ARE WORLD-WIDE

A few moments ago I suggested that I did not want to venture on a detailed discussion of the content of a liberal arts program. There is, however, one area about which I feel very strongly. The problems which the United States faces in the second half of the twentieth century are world-wide in scope and incredibly complex in character. They differ in kind and not merely in degree from the problems which occupied the attention of this nation up to the end of World War II. The extent to which the free world will prosper, peradventure the extent to which it will survive, will depend on how we deal with the new problems of a different kind of world. It is an unfamiliar world composed not only of "old, unhappy, far-off things, and battles long ago," but also of peoples and places hitherto unknown and of behavior which we find incomprehensible. An American arbitrates the fate of a primitive race in West New Guinea because it is important to the stability of the world that the dispute between the Dutch and the Indonesians be peace-

fully settled. We send aid missions to help the economic development of a Latin-American country which nationalizes American investments and rejoices in our discomfiture over Cuba. Our young men and women go with the Peace Corps to places in Africa we find it difficult to locate even with an atlas.

CHANGE IN INTELLECTUAL OUTLOOK

Whitehead once observed that "any serious fundamental change in the intellectual outlook of human society must necessarily be followed by an educational revolution." Our world is requiring a fundamental change in intellectual outlook. We must now seek ways of adjusting our education to that change. What do we expect of the liberally educated college graduate today? Since his life will be affected by events happening all around the world, we have a right to expect a world-wide rather than a provincial point of view. A special effort will need to be made to break out of the Western tradition in order to gain insights into non-Western cultures. This will involve some rearrangement of the curriculum and of the content of traditional courses. It can also be aided by more foreign students on our campuses, more American students studying or living abroad, more faculty travel and work in foreign countries. Any real change in institutional patterns is likely to be painful and certain to be expensive, but I see no alternative if our society wants to survive and if education is to play its part.

Finally, I believe that a college has an inescapable responsibility for the education of the spirit as well as of the mind. There are other values than the intellectual, and a free society based on the dignity of individual men cannot survive without people of courage, integrity, tolerance, humility, justice and love. The spiritual quality of life

stems from both the Judaeo-Christian tradition and from the humanism of the Hellenistic world. Robert Maynard Hutchins once said that the virtues just referred to are the responsibility of the home, the church and the community, whereas the responsibility of the university is to train the mind. Even if this were true of the university, it has no relevance to the small liberal arts college. Our task was never more eloquently stated than by Ruskin: "The entire object of true education is to make men not merely do the right things but enjoy the right things, not merely learned but to love knowledge, not merely industrious but to love industry, not merely just but to hunger and thirst after justice."

One cannot live for four years in this College without being profoundly influenced by it. Its stamp is on us, and our style of behavior reflects what we have absorbed. Let me remind you of the College's statement of purpose reprinted in your inaugural program. Carleton "aims at excellence of intellectual training, conducted in an atmosphere of Christian ethics and Christian liberalism which is its fortunate heritage. It hopes to send out graduates distinguished by their ability to make critical and independent judgments, by their desire to enhance their civilization with the works of their reason and their imagination, and by their will to challenge any threat to the freedom and dignity of man."

Our task is to turn that hope into reality. I invite your participation in that exciting venture.

— JOHN W. NASON