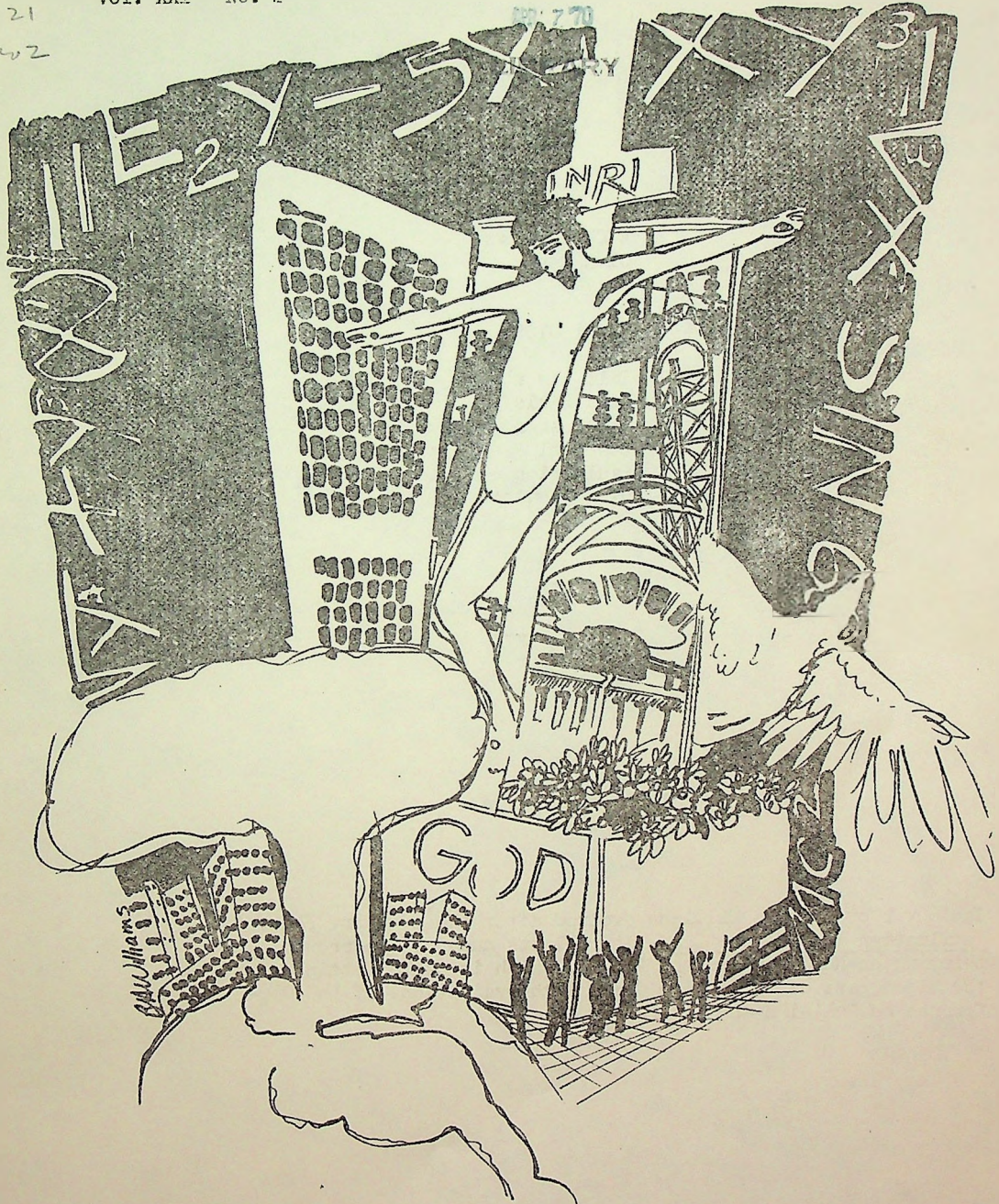


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THE SEMINARIAN

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The cover by Barbara Williams evolved after she read Dr. Fackro's Humiliation and Celebration. It reflects much of the present thinking on Religion and the Future, which is quite fitting, for the major part of this issue deals with evaluations of the Conference on Religion and the Future.

LETTER FROM ENGLAND

by
Paul Irion

A year of living, studying, working in a setting removed by one ocean-width from home is a necessary and valuable disjunction from the familiar, the taken-for-granted. It compels a constant evaluation, not only of the new experiences that deluge in upon one, but also all of the experiences of the past now viewed from a new perspective.

The situation of the English church is in many ways quite desperate. An article by John Robinson in The New Christian reports statistics like these: In the decade 1956-1966 there was a decline of 15 percent in the number of Church of England baptisms per 1000 live births. In London this decline was nearly 33 per cent. During that same period there was a decline of 23 per cent of confirmations per 1000 population in adolescent years. In Robinson's former diocese this decline was 49 percent. Nationally, Church of England ordinations have dropped 25 per cent in five years and there is a decline of 59 percent of those who are entering theological training from 1963-1968. Sections of Lancaster County might take note of the fact that this decline is in a country where there is compulsory religious education and compulsory prayers in the public schools.

Our personal observations are that most churches are poorly attended. It is not uncommon to find large churches with just a handful of people attending worship. A few churches we have seen in Oxford and London where there are signs of vitality and participation. My own reflection, with no statistical support, is that these tend to be non-conformist churches rather than C. of E..

One striking attempt to carry out the ministry of the church was a national effort made in December by C. of E. and non-conformists alike: a sign-in to help the world's poor. This was proposed by Barbara Ward and carried out through the British Council of Churches. Members of all churches were challenged to pledge 1 per cent of their income annually to a fund for aiding the poor and hungry of the world, until such time as the British government more fully exercises its responsibility to the Third World. I have seen no reports as yet of the success (or failure) of this campaign but it did receive a great deal of attention in the press.

In the course of my research I am making contact with quite a few English vicars and pastors. I find them a mixed group. Some are quiet muddlers wading their way through treacloy tradition. Others are alive and alert, well-church, concerned--albeit often frustrated. Some of the most exciting men I have talked to are finding new supplemental ministries to augment their parish work. This seems a bit more common in the non-conformist churches. Sometimes it is economic, where congregations will encourage their pastor to take additional "secular" employment because they do not feel they can provide an adequate salary. So it is not uncommon to find ministers working at least half time as school counselors, assistant group therapists in mental hospitals, social workers, etc.. Sometimes such supplemental ministries are self-consciously ways in which the minister tries to make a more relevant impact on human need.

I am working one day a week at Oxford Samaritans, a suicide prevention and counseling center. Some of the people doing the most counseling here, without pay, are ministers who find that they can fulfill their ministries much more helpfully counseling in a center, without being identified as priests or pastors, than in traditional parish activities. They range all the way from young vicars who have had a good bit of experience with sensitivity training and clinical theology to a swinging Dominican monk from Blackfriars to retired pastors with a world of experience in suffering.

Some pastors I have found to be very pessimistic about the future of the church in England. Several have commented that they do not see it

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LETTER cont.

surviving more than a decade or two at most in its present form. Others are looking for new ways to bring life into the work of the church.

With BBC as our chief in-put, we are impressed with the amount of frank, honest, open theological discussion that goes on on TV. What a switch from the innocuous, gutless palaver that calls itself religious TV in the States. For example, on Sunday there was an excellent survey of religion in the 60's showing the way in which the man of the street, as well as people like Robinson, Williams, Cox and others were struggling to find new ways to express the meanings of what they regard as ultimate. Panel discussions will show agnostics or philosophical atheists and theologians and churchmen locked in fearsome debate. Interviewers are extremely aggressive and intelligent, asking probing questions which expose in one rapier thrust a platitude here or an unsupported "truth" there. The atmosphere is very adult--laying out both sides of the argument so that people can make up their own minds, rather than exuding some pre-digested solution to the problem.

My own research into the meanings which persons are giving to crisis experience in the British secular society, has narrowed down somewhat. I found that when we began to discuss crisis experience, almost inevitably the person began to talk about death and his feelings toward it. Since this is a very familiar area to me, I began to strengthen the focus on death and its meanings. I have been conducting interviews on the subject with a broad variety of people: social scientists and anthropologists, an avant garde group in a Presbyterian Church in London, university students, pastors, bereaved individuals, journalists, etc.. I find that a number of people who have no particular stake in the church and its belief system are extremely interested in the theme I am exploring. Just this morning I was in touch with a professor of linguistics here who is much concerned with the symbols used to talk about death in many languages. One thing that seems to be emerging from my interviews is that many people find traditional words and meanings pretty empty and are struggling to find new ways of expressing responsibly their deepest fears and hopes.

My contact with students in both Germany this summer and England has helped me to understand that the current dis-ease in the young adult generation is a universal (or at least an international) phenomenon. The causes and concerns expressed are not always identical but they seem to be very similar. This summer I spent several days talking with German students at the Kirchentag in Stuttgart. These weren't "church-types" like one might find at a church conference at home. They were university students with a religious commitment to revolutionary activity to serve humanity but with little commitment to the established church. They formed a noisy, intrusive, penetrating conscience for this great gathering of German church people--which I characterized as 1/3 camp meeting, 1/3 county fair, and 1/3 SDS convention. Some of the leaders were theological students from great German universities. Many were ideologically Marxists. In discussion most of them articulated the need to approach theology anthropologically. They were not at all hesitant to move very quickly beyond traditional theological argument to talk of God as the making possible of human relations or the cross as a pattern of human relationship. Here at Oxford there is considerable interest in philosophical theology. It is my impression that students of theology tend to stay a bit more on the familiar paths of thought than some of the German students I talked to. Nevertheless, the strong philosophical orientation provides a climate of considerable openness and tentativeness. The tutorial system, which is the center of the Oxford education, does a good job in making education dialogical, increasing critical facility, discouraging illogical argumentation.

Student activism is very much present at Oxford. There is so much to bounce off of, in terms of establishment and custom. There is widespread reaction to wearing the little academic gowns, appearing for various university ceremonials like matriculation. But most significant protests are made

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LETTER cont.

against apartheid symbolized at present by a touring South African Rugby team (all white) which played its first match against Oxford. There is also a great deal of agitation against British support of Nigeria against Biafra and lack of deployment of national resources for assistance of the underdeveloped nations. One hears little organized agitation about the growing problem of relationships between Englishmen and immigrants who are pouring in from the Commonwealth. There was great interest in the Moratoriums and peace demonstrations in the US. BBC sent special news teams to give coverage by satellite TV. We had a small sympathy demonstration here in Oxford on Moratorium days. Some British people somewhat sardonically imply, "Now you know what it's like to get shoved out of the place of unquestioned international power." Others suggest that America cannot command a place of greatness in the world until it possesses the humility to withdraw from a morally untenable position.

I hope that the new year finds you all hard at work, knowing daily the enrichment that comes through study and reflection in the arduous task of exploring the "truth" for your time and place.

+ + +

PRAYER

by

Stuart I. Troutman

Our heavenly Father, the longer we become involved in the theological enterprise, the more we realize how ridiculous the whole thing is. The best minds of the past two thousand years have been unable to fully understand your revelation in Jesus Christ. Now we in our turn add our meagre efforts. May we never become so serious, solemn, and self-righteous that we can stand back and laugh at ourselves and the impossibility of our task. Nevertheless, help us to persevere in our futility, for we know we can do no other. Amen.

INTEMPERATE FLUGELHORN ABSTENTION
(frivously dedicated to the LTS faculty)
by
Stuart I. Troutman

Flugelhorns await the dawn.

*They have returned!
Can this ever be?
What of the primordial petulance,
The slothful synergism?*

*Poor John Calvin! Alas for Luther!
Their legions have been decimated.
Flugelhorns have sealed their ennu
And promise promulgation of
Addictive absolution in the cosmic contagion
That threatens to engulf us all.*

*Counterattack the flugelhorns!
Their demise must be hastened.
Pity their petulance but sustain it not.
Grieve over their synergism,
Repudiate their sloth.*

SUPERSTAR

by

Andrew Lloyd Webber & Tim Rice

Submitted by Earl Ball

*Every time I look at you I don't understand
Why you let the things you did get so out of hand
You'd have to manage better if you'd had it planned
Why'd you choose such a backward time and such
a strange land?*

*If you'd come today you would have reached a
whole nation*

Israel 4 BC had no mass communication

Don't you get me wrong

I only want to know

*Jesus Christ Jesus Christ Who are you? What have
you sacrificed?*

*Jesus Christ Superstar Do you think you're what
they say you are?*

*Tell me what you think about your friends at the top
Who d'you think besides yourself's the pick of
the crop?*

Buddah was he where it's at, was he where you are?

Could Mahomet move a mountain or was that just PR?

Did you mean to die like that? Was that a mistake or

*Did you know your messy death would be a
record-breaker?*

Don't you get me wrong

I only want to know

*Jesus Christ Jesus Christ Who are you? What have
you sacrificed?*

*Jesus Christ Superstar Do you think you're what
they say you are?*



The remainder of this issue is devoted to the Conference on Religion and the Future, held at King-of-Prussia on November 20 to 23. The editors wish to thank the participants from Lancaster who have given us their thoughts on what happened at the Conference.

CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE: SO WHAT?

by
Leo J. Gable

Yes, some of us attended a high level Conference on Religion and the Future. That was three months ago. So what?

The notes I made at the time, and my reflections since then, fall largely into two categories: issues posed by future into which we are moving, and implications for us. In this article I would like to point to some of these issues and then focus on two implications.

Some Issues

1. How to understand and keep up with change. Every time an expert spoke about his field we realized that change has far outrun the knowledge of most of us. We do not understand the technical vocabulary of another field. This is as much the problem of the scientist who is naive about church and theology as it is the problem of the theologian who does not know his science. We sensed a desperate need for communication.

2. Who makes decisions, or what is the role of the elite? The elite assumes that he knows what is best for the rest of us. But does he? Can he be trusted? We saw too much evidence of the expert who moves ahead in his particular technology, unaware of the broad and ultimate effects of what he is doing.

3. How can science and technology be made to serve basic human values? This issue surfaced many times. It was sharply put when a theologian accused a "think tank" expert of using the massive resources of his planning agency to serve "tribal concerns" when he might have used those resources to serve global concerns. This issue was basic to some probing discussion of new developments in control of the mind. It was basic also to the deep concern of the conference with pollution of man's environment.

4. How can man deal responsibly and consistently with the challenges of the future? As the conference developed, we sensed this issue growing out of the very things we were doing together. We found ourselves participating in a conference on the future that was using methodologies of the past: too much one-way communication, making little use of modern media; too little opportunity for conference participants to engage experts in probing the issues; extensive televising of presentations that were almost entirely lectures, the cameras and the lights often competing with the lecturer. It had been expected that a near-by space center would be a major factor in the conference. Actually, the sole contribution of the space center to the conference was one inept lecture, somewhat below the level of a nineteenth century Sunday school lesson. Oddly enough, the issues of the future were more comprehensively presented by the multi-media "labyrinth" room through which we entered the conference room than by the conference program of lectures.

The way I have presented this fourth issue seems like a devastating criticism. It is just that with respect to many aspects of the conference methodology. The substance of the presentations, however, and the persons who were assembled for the conference made it a most significant four days. The critical finger must be pointed not only at this particular conference design but also at ourselves. How often our performance falls short of our intentions - as individuals, as churches, as seminary! For us, the answer to "So what?" must be found in our response to change. How can we, in seminary and in church, be both responsible and consistent as we face the massive and conflicting impact of the future?

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CONFERENCE cont.

Two Implications for Theological Education

1. It is our distinctive task to explore theology and mission in relation to change. What can be known about the effects of technological and scientific change on man? What human values are strengthened by technology and science? What human values are threatened? On the basis of our best theological reflection how should we respond to change as it is developing? As we understand the Christian mission, what is the responsibility of the church? What is the responsibility of the Christian?

Every field of theological education needs to take part in this exploration. Every field has a contribution to make to it. Almost every course should include some time to face the question of our response to change, in the light of the purpose of that particular course.

2. Experience in facing the issues the future poses is more important than the conclusions that are reached. The implication is that every member of the Seminary community should have the experience of facing these issues. So should every member of a church.

For us in the Seminary, this means that we should be joining with student and faculty of other professional schools in exploring such issues as were broadly described above. We need to do it with other seminaries, both Protestant and Catholic. We need to do it with such professional schools as the Horshy Medical Center, Dickinson Law School, and graduate departments of Millersville State College.

We need to take this concern with us into our ministries. Almost every community has in it some people who play significant roles in some kind of future-oriented enterprise. It is part of our Christian mission to involve those people in mature reflection on the meaning of their faith for their vocation. No one can prescribe now just when and how this may best be done. The future is too unpredictable for us to dare to try to prescribe it now. Yet the task of helping people to face these issues in an inescapable part of ministry, beginning now.

Margaret Mead, among others, is reminding us that we face a basic discontinuity. The time into which we are moving is not an extension of the past. It is different, so different that the growing generation can find neither assured guides nor assured guidelines from the past. She has a point. We need to have and to help others to have, experience in facing together the nature of change and the response which we may make to it.

THEY'RE DO NOT BE ANXIOUS ABOUT TOMORROW
FOR TOMORROW WILL BE ANXIOUS FOR ITSELF.
-Matthew 6:34-
LET THE DAY'S OWN TROUBLE BE TROUBLE FOR THE DAY.

THE CONFERENCE ON RELIGION AND THE FUTURE

by
Bill Bower

Man is approaching a new age of discovery, not so much an age of discovering new scientific data, uncovering a new continent, as in the age of exploration, or new worlds, although he is doing that, but rather man is questing to find himself and his relationship to the Cosmos. This quest has developed in man as a result from man discovering that regardless of how much knowledge science adds to our knowledge of the objective world, it in no way diminishes the infinity of the unknown. It is a paradox that as science adds to our body of knowledge of physical phenomena, it also adds a greater number of questions to that body of the unknown or not yet understood. This infinite mass of knowledge, both known and unknown, leaves man in awe, in which some men find religion.

Religion, at the Conference on Religion and the Future, was defined by T. J. Gordon in three separate concepts—1) man's belief in a higher intelligence, a creative force, and an ordering though in the universe; 2) the ecstatic experience or flash of insight, thought to bring man closer to the infinite; and 3) the institution. The future of all three of these concepts of religion were discussed at the Conference.

In Leslie Dewart's presentation of "Man and His Historical Future," he pointed out that by his very nature, man projects himself in time through man's historical consciousness. During his speech he made an important distinction in that theology does not attempt to predict future events, but rather the advance of the futurity of events.

The conference centered around the developments in the physical and biological sciences, with their applied technologies, and what their discoveries will mean towards man's control of his environment and his biological development, both provinces which were previously in the hands of nature, God or chance, depending upon one's point of view. Along with this, came a concern for the new chemical modifiers of mood and perception, commonly known as tranquilizers, pop pills, alcohol, marijuana, and LSD, which are not really new since various worshippers have been using them for thousands of years.

The question which the conference was most concerned with was who is going to have their hands on these controls, be it interference of our biological evolution, mind control as Jose Dolgado very concretely showed was possible to a certain extent at the present time, or producing basic changes in one's very personality, through cheap, non-narcotic drugs which were predicted would be available commercially within the next ten years. What does the religious community have to say to the dialogue on these controls?

The churches today are more than custodians of the symbols, rituals, and cultural history of the religions they interpret. However, their mandate to dictate moral laws by which everyone must live, especially in an age when many people are not even listening to the Church.

The question of whether or not to keep the institution of the Church came up in several of our small group discussion. The people at the conference, who were mostly Church administrators at the conference or national level and Seminary professors, were asking whether the present institution of the Church was capable of meeting the future needs of religion. And, if not, could it be modified or would it need to be disregarded?

After listing such men as Dewart, Dolgado, John Calhoun and John McHale, the Conference ended with Harvey Cox's view of what the future form of religion might be. He expressed his beliefs that religion will consist of mainly two things—small groups in communal type living with an occasional "big show" such as the Catholic Mass. With this development, Cox's view sees the coming of a "Christoid" man.

Although the Conference had great potential, it was very disappointing in the fact that the resources of the participants were not used more fully.

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CONFERENCE cont.

Kenneth Cauthon, one of the planners of the Conference, accurately described the Conference this way—the Conference has turned out to be a group of super experts telling experts what was good, true, and beautiful. Although nothing concrete was solved at the Conference, the Conference was most worthwhile and pointed to a need for many more such conferences. The Conference became a demonstration, on the part of its planners and participants, to see the church lead in the development and adaptation of the institution to the needs of the future, rather than continue down the road to atrophy.

* * *

A BIT OF PRAISE

by

Ron Davis

At this time, the Conference on Religion and the Future is already a past event. The what, why, when and where of the Conference have been explained, discussed and published (see LIF and The Voice). Perhaps some of you were impressed when you heard about the internationally known personalities—Harvey Cox, Herman Kahn, Leslie Dewart, Julian Bond, Eddie Albert, etc.—who spoke at the Conference; perhaps some of you were critical when you heard about the prohibitive cost of the four-day Conference at the plush Holiday Inn located directly across from the largest shopping center in the United States; and perhaps some of you were amazed when you heard the shortcomings of the Conference—the overloaded schedule, the poor use of communication methods and of mechanical apparatus, the failure to draw upon the talents of the conferees, etc.—of which you have no doubt been fully informed.

I believe you have been impressed, critical, and amazed because I felt the same way. But I have another feeling which I wish to share with you now—a feeling that I have not expressed to many before. This feeling has developed slowly since I returned to the everyday life of the seminary. As my emotional response to the participants has subsided, the implications of what they said have become clearer to me; and, as the Conference setting itself has taken on a hazy, dream-like quality of a past event, only the really important faces, names, personalities and wisdom have remained outstanding. (It is surprising how certain names keep popping up in various classes, readings and discussions.) This feeling is one of INSPIRATION.

Let me give you a few examples of what I mean, for the inspiration has come in several different forms. I have been inspired to explore new areas. It was my good fortune to be placed in several small-group discussions with Dr. Arthur Shostak, a sociology professor from Drexel Institute of Technology and a member of the World Futurists Society, who increased my awareness of the problems and possibilities facing us from a sociological point of view. His recommendation of such books as Christopher Rand's Los Angeles: The City of the Future has opened a whole new area of concern for me. Meeting Harvey Cox, listening to him speak, watching his actions and reactions, and observing how he handled a question and answer period has certainly offered me more stimuli to approach his writings than I have of men whom I have never seen before.

I was inspired by the living faith shown by the various conferees. At one point in the conference, after a rather depressing prophecy that man has only about fifteen more years on earth before he has completely destroyed himself, I had a conversation with some church executive who professed his faith that God has a purpose for man, that He controls history, and that He would not allow man to destroy himself in such a senseless manner. At another point, after a panel of scientists had answered the question "Do I belong to any form of institutionalized religion?" negatively and had given reasons why "religion" turned them off, I

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PRAISE cont.

overheard some positive comments to the effect that listening carefully, we should be able to sense enough what changes need be made, and that as the experts we should be qualify ourselves to make the church what it should be. Generally, I was impressed by the high level of education, intelligence, and knowledge possessed by the conferees which were evident by the questions they asked, the discussions in which they took part, and the proposals they made for coming to grips with the future.

Most of all, however, I was impressed by the very fact that this Conference was conceived, sponsored, developed, and carried through by the church--that much criticized, socially lagging, divided, dying, self-centered institution. Here was a truly ecumenical Conference--inter-denominational, Catholic and Jewish, Negro and White, American and Canadian; young and old. It wasn't exactly "the whole inhabited earth," but it came closer than any other religious conference that I have heard about. There is hope for the church in the future. And the hope is not based entirely on faith alone. This Conference was a concrete, existential, real manifestation of that hope. And we are likely to see more and more of this kind of conference in the very near future.

Just in case the point has been missed, I was inspired by the Conference on Religion and the Future. The benefit received from attending such a conference goes beyond the actual speeches and discussions. The change in my outlook and attitudes, the making of new friendships and acquaintances, the opening of new interests and concerns, and the confrontation with people of varying backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences are the real value of a conference. I appreciate the opportunity to attend, and I would recommend all LTS students to take full advantage of any future opportunities to participate in a conference.

* * *

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

by

Joe Foster

The conference room was packed as men and women from the entire span of our nation waited each day to hear about Religion and the future. Words spoken by the guest lecturers were prophetic, optimistic, pessimistic, hopeful, or despairing. It depends upon your disposition to trust man.

Indeed, the highest compliment that I can pay to the Conference on Religion and the Future is that it pointed out to me most vividly that man is not to be trusted. Call it sin or what have you, man always has a habit of taking the most beautiful creation and making it into a monster.

Eddie Albert told us about pollution and ecological imbalance. Of environmental upsets and man-made sewage ponds from beautiful lakes. Of the possible extinction of many things that man has managed to "screw up".

Jose Delgado and others, spoke of the many break-throughs in medicine and technology and how man can now make significant changes in attitudes of individuals through electronically controlled modules placed in peoples' brains. He also spoke of the need to broaden the number of people who make decisions on how the processes are used.

There was little really to prove that this was a Conference on Religion and the Future. It might have been better to call it "How can Religion Respond to the Developments of Science and this Impact on the Future?"

I really missed the opportunity to discuss the theological implications of
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HERE cont.

what was being presented to us. There was little time for this type of interplay and feedback with the scientists.

For weeks after I returned from the Conference, I kept asking myself: "So what?" I have heard a lot of interesting things, but no real attempt to do anything about them or to plan to develop a strategy for the future.

Meanwhile, back at the seminary and the local churches, people are probably as unaware of what is going on in their world as I was before going to the Conference. The world is moving faster these days. It is ever-changing and we in the church try to live as though it were still the First Century. We have to constantly evaluate where we are and begin to make adjustments in our thinking and method of message-making to cope with these changes.

If I learned nothing else from the Conference, it was that Man has never changed. He may disillusion himself into thinking that he is a better person now that he has "come of age", but he is still as "immediacy oriented" and "self-centered" as he has always been.



ΕΞΑΚΤΟΝ