



HERE WE STAND

President Martin Answers Some Questions Asked

by Alumni and Others About Status of University

Institutions, like individuals, must at certain times define their position and take their bearings. Ottawa University, with other colleges of like character, is entering a new era of its history. Very soon there will be increased enrollments, difficult problems of financing and personnel, demands for new services in a more and more complex American society, new pressures of many kinds. We are doing our best to provide for these demands even now. We are expanding facilities, increasing our services, making new plans as we anticipate the requirements of the immediate years ahead, as well as those of the farther future so far as we can see it.

It is our desire in the midst of many necessary changes to keep the central purpose of Ottawa University intact. Changing circumstances must not be allowed to overthrow established principles. Ottawa University stands for something. It has survived and progressed because of this fact. Here in summary are the answers to some of the basic and current questions regarding the position, denominational and otherwise, of the University.

What is the present relationship between Ottawa University and the Baptist denomination?

We are often asked: Who owns Ottawa University? The answer is that no one strictly speaking *owns* an institution of this sort. A college, like a church, is held in trust under law. It is governed and maintained in the interests of a total constituency. Ottawa University is controlled by its Board of Trustees. The institution enjoys close cooperative relations with the Baptist denomination. While the board of thirty-six trustees is self-governing, nevertheless the denomination has a part in determining the membership of this governing body. For example, the constitution of the University says that three-fourths of the trustees must be active Baptists. Again, those appointed to fill vacancies in any given year are drawn from a panel of names mutually agreed to by the Board of the University and the Board of the State Convention. Thus, the Baptist Convention is an active partner in the affairs of the University at all times. The University on its part, receives substantial financial support direct from the Kansas Baptist State Convention. It

receives also token financial support from the Board of Education of the American Baptist Convention.

Do you anticipate this arrangement will be altered in the near future?

The selection of our trustees by mutual agreement has worked very well for a number of years. However, there are those who would like to have the denomination take a still larger part in determining the government of the University. The problem here is whether the convention should own the University outright and appoint its trustees. Actually, in the last analysis not only Kansas Baptists but the American Baptist Convention, the alumni, and the community have all a certain right to be represented.

In view of the financial support of alumni in years past, will they participate in any new plan of control?

As already stated there are several groups who support, and always have supported the University whose representation on the board will have to be recognized. The alumni represent one of the most influential of these groups from every standpoint. They now have official representation on the board through their president and of course several members of the board are alumni. But the extent of the official representation of alumni in the future would be a matter for most serious consideration if any change is made in the character of the board.

Do you feel that Baptists nationally will take new interest in their colleges and in supporting higher education?

There is no doubt of a denominational awakening to the needs of the colleges and universities related to Baptist work. The determination to give greater support is now evident. The American Baptist Convention has authorized the raising of \$7,500,000 for higher education within its boundaries. This effort will be made in 1959-1960. Ottawa University will share in the campaign.

What about the feeling by some people that the Church should concern itself with religion and leave

higher education to the State as in the case of elementary and secondary education?

Ottawa University is committed to the direct relation of religion to education. There are people who think that the real business of the Church is religion and that education should be left to the State. In reply to this position it should be pointed out that the Church has always been a teaching community. It must maintain its teaching services to secure the understanding and devotion of its members as well as to supply the leaders it needs to carry on its work in the world. Actually, the Church was the original matrix of all formal education.

But, the relation of religion to education depends on something more than this historical fact. It arises out of the very nature and purpose of education itself. For, education seeks not only to inform the mind through knowledge, but also to instill the sense of responsibility for the proper use of knowledge in human life. This becomes a question of moral outlook and conviction which have their source and inspiration in the religious view of life. Intelligence and conscience are both the objects of educational concern. Lord Macaulay once said: "Ninety-tenths of the calamities that have befallen humanity have no other origin than the union of high intelligence with low desires."

Do you think that emphasis on religious matters makes it difficult to place strong emphasis on academic procedures? Are students so interested in singing hymns and reading religious books that they fail to probe deeply into chemistry, history, or whatever academic subjects they are taking?

The emphasis on religion is fundamental in a denominational college. But, important as religion is, it is not meant to take the place of sound academic work. The first responsibility of the Christian College or University is to do a good job of its educational task. It can do this well and at the same time do full justice to its religious purpose. Piety and learning are allies, not competitors, in the moulding of the mind.

Students often misunderstand the relationship between faith or piety and learning. There are always those who think that the function of the Christian College is to confirm their religious ideas whatever they may be. They don't want the search for truth. They shirk the hard discipline of learning. They only want the label of academic respectability without a genuine change of mind. This can become the worst kind of hypocrisy.

Do some good students feel that they may be "restricted" in Ottawa University because it is a Christian College? And, are they?

It is a fact that some good students feel that any religious emphasis or requirement is a restriction of their

liberty, and in a sense this is true. Even academic discipline is a restriction upon liberty from one point of view. There are some things that are prohibited and others required in a Christian College because of its religious purpose. These are not burdensome and they are not even "restrictive" to any student who has a normal attitude to religion and morals. Ottawa seeks students who are concerned about the truth regarding life and who want to make a real "success" of the business of living.

How can religious emphasis be made more acceptable to young people without reducing its value?

The Christian College has a real problem on its hands in making religion understandable and acceptable to young people without reducing its meaning or value. In the first place, many students come from backgrounds where a very immature and unsatisfactory interpretation of religion has been imparted. To them the college presentation of religious truth or ceremony may be a shock. Other students, because of the irreligious nature of their upbringing or because of their own choice, feel that the college is too religious.

It is the business of the denominational college to present religion at its very best. Religion should challenge the mind in a mature way. It should be vital and related to the student's condition as an individual. In its presentation of religion the college should strive for conviction and understanding, for life commitment, and leadership.

Will financial support for Ottawa and other Christian colleges be increasingly difficult? Can the churches continue to support their schools and will they?

Support for denominational colleges will be more difficult as time goes on because of the probable increasing expense of education. In some areas the student may be required to pay more of the cost of his education than he now does. In our situation we do not see at present that we can go up in our charges much more without making it difficult for many worthy young people to attend Ottawa University.

Industry over the country is giving increasingly from corporate income for the support of independent colleges. In Kansas income from this source is bound to be limited as we are not a highly industrialized state.

The only hope for the future is to cultivate a broad base of annual gifts to the college from alumni and friends. This is the greatest single source of income apart from the church constituency.

The churches can and, I believe will, do more especially in providing scholarship funds to aid worthy young people. Many outstanding Baptist youth cannot go to college at present because they lack the financial means to do so. The church constituency will not allow this condition to persist without remedy.