

EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF BETHANY BIBLE COLLEGE

by Rev. Wilbur H. Mullen

Any institution of learning must measure its success over against its own educational aims.

Doubtless the prime reason for the establishment of Bethany lay in its practical service to the denomination of which it is a part. There are, however, certain broad educational values which any college, regardless of local purposes, seeks to impart to its students. These values are closely associated with the concept of education itself and are more difficult to measure. Probably the student himself is best able to judge of success in the light of a question which every student should ask: "What does education mean to me?" In offering a few possible suggestions as to how this question might be answered it will help to note, first, what education does not mean.

Education is not:

1. **A substitute for faith.** This point opens up the classic problem of reason versus faith. With a few notable exceptions, probably most Christian thinkers would say that faith and education when complementary are creative, but divorced they may be destructive.

2. **Something that ends.** A diploma is only the "commencement." A college education is like looking through the index of a great encyclopedia: It merely indicates the vast amount of knowledge that is available.

3. **A collection of facts.** A person who knows ten thousand facts about each of the main branches of knowledge may still be the most useless person in town.

4. **A skill only.** Skill is certainly included, but education limited to "skills" and "tools" does injustice to the world of ideas and values. It is one thing to know the technique of applying paint to canvas, another thing to have aesthetic appreciation.

What, then, is education? The following characteristics are certainly not exhaustive, but most, if not all of them, will be present in an educated person.

Education includes:

1. **An awareness and appreciation of the past.** One cannot explain meaningfully where he is until he knows whence he came. The history of events and ideas tell us how we got where we are, and how much we owe to others.

2. **The ability to communicate.** An educated person has mastered his own language, at least to the extent that he can use it correctly and effectively. In addition to his own tongue, the basic knowledge of at least one foreign language more than doubles a person's communication skill, as well as opening the door to a cultural and psychological appreciation of another ethnic group.

3. **Depth of knowledge in at least one field.** "Depth of knowledge" is, of course, relative; but a person should be an "expert" in some one subject, probably in the area where he feels most at home, and where he would like to make his contribution to the world. The concept of a college "major" grows out of this idea.

4. **The awareness of the relevance of other fields besides one's own.** It is an academic truism that unless one knows something about other branches of knowledge he cannot understand his own. The reason for this is simple: Isolated truth does not exist. Truth is a seamless garment. For instance, how could one understand the Church without some knowledge of history?

5. **The ability to relate knowledge to present problems.** The relevancy of education itself is tested here. How do facts apply in this situation? How may this problem be solved with the knowledge available? Knowledge at this point becomes the tool of wisdom, and vision, and insight, all of which are extra-curricular.

6. **The eager and receptive attitude to new truth.** What is written is written, but there is a growing, dynamic edge to knowledge which is constantly oriented to the future. Here is adventure and excitement. Education which worships only the dead past has no right to be called education.

7. **An inner reservoir of ideas and values.** One does not learn "impersonally." What one studies and learns becomes a part of himself. Education is a journey among great ideas, but one does not return from the journey the same as he went. By introspection and meditation the riches of the world of ideas are transmuted into one's own inner life. One goes to see the Grand Canyon with his eyes, but he takes it home with him in his soul.

8. **A sense of a spiritual cosmic order.** A naturalistic view of the universe leaves too many facts unexplained, such as the desire to worship, the presence of goodness, the feeling of obligation. Much contemporary "education" chooses to omit spiritual data which are as valid for education as the so-called facts of physics. A true education is synoptic and inclusive.

The meaning of education is something about which both student and institution should be constantly con-

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ELECTED SUPERINTENDENT



Rev. H. R. Ingersoll

Delegates attending this year's Alliance Session elected Rev. Ralph Ingersoll as Superintendent for 1960-62. Brother Ingersoll is a native of Saint John, N. B., son of Mr. and Mrs. H. K. Ingersoll, of that city. He was educated in his home city through High School, and then attended Teachers' College at Fredericton, and University of New Brunswick. He left teaching in secular schools while principal at Glen Falls, N. B., in response to God's call to the ministry. He was ordained at Beulah Camp July, 1947, and has served pastorates of our Alliance at Beals, Maine; Barker's Point, N. B., and Woodstock, N. B. He also served as principal of Bethany Bible College, and in the field of evangelism. For the past three years he has been General Secretary of the New Brunswick Temperance Federation. Brother Ingersoll and his wife, the former Kathleen Wilson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Wilson, and their three children, Joanne, 10, Donald, 6, and Douglas, 2, live at 7 Gorman Ave., Saint John.

May God anoint our new leader and use him mightily!