

Trinity Tripod

Published weekly throughout the academic year by the STUDENTS OF TRINITY COLLEGE. Subscription \$4.00 per year. Student subscription included in tuition fee. Entered at Hartford, Connecticut, as second class matter February 14, 1947, under the Act of March 3, 1879. The columns of THE TRINITY TRIPOD are at all times open to alumni, undergraduates, and others for the discussion of matters of interest to Trinity men.

Notice of Change of Address for Mail Subscriptions must be received two weeks in advance.

Office Telephone JA 7-3153, Extension 90, or JA 7-5508

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Editor-in-Chief Sanford A. Bredine, '60
Managing Editor Peter T. Kilborn, '61
Business Manager Edward Brink, '60
News Editor Lloyd M. Costley, '60
Sports Editor Matthew A. Levine, '60
Features Editor William Kirtz, '61

EDITORIAL STAFF

Associate Editors Robert Guertin, '61;
John Henry, '61; Roy Price, '61; Edward Waggoner, '61;
Samuel Wagner, '61.

STAFF

Bob Langen, '60; Murray Morse, '60; Rick Boardman, '61; Kerry B. Fitzpatrick, '61; Dave Alberts, '62; William Chase, '62; Pete Hendricks, '62; John Meyer, '62; Andy Miller, '62; George Will, '62; Robert A. Winter, '60; John Stambaugh, '61.

BUSINESS STAFF

Advertising Manager David Wadhams, '62
Martin LeBus, '62
Circulation Manager John Peters, '60
Ross King, '62

Page 2
MAY 20, 1959

LETTERS . . .

Nolan Evaluates Chapel

To the Editor:

As a student who has not only participated in the college's religious programs, but also who will continue his studies for a religious vocation at the Berkeley Divinity School in the fall, I should like to submit to you my observations of one means for religious growth and development on this campus, that of the work connected with the Chapel.

It seems to me that the function of a college chaplain includes the providing for worship, the offering of counselling when needed, and the providing of help in reaching solutions to intellectual religious problems.

As has been noted during weeks past by articles in the *Tripod*, the preaching in the Chapel is not suitable to young men with inquiring minds. The sermons by and large are not meeting the needs of students who may be either in a state of confusion or evaluation. The noble pronouncements which emanate from the pulpit do not hit the core of the undergraduate's religious dilemma and may well alienate him from religion.

Effective counselling for a thinking student does not consist of stories about clergymen's experiences and accomplishments in "real life religious situations" in which God's (apparent) help to people has been witnessed and subsequent suggestions that one just gives his problems to God. To claim that God has helped others and to therefore expect students to throw themselves at God's feet for similar help is not a method which may be effectively applied to many students. The Christian minister's counselling ought to help an individual solve his problems with the minister's and God's help.

The dealing with the "why's" of religion is a part of the responsibility of the college religious worker in the pulpit and in individual situations. It is not respectable for the intellectual buck to be wholly passed on to the faculty. This aspect of religious work in higher education is, perhaps, the distinguishing factor between the emphases in a parish and a college situation. The inquiring student is asking, "Why religion?" He has heard pronouncements on this question before entering college. Here in college he wants to learn whether or not there are any reliable foundations for these pronouncements other than the appeal alone to emotion.

The present method of providing spiritual care for the college community is to impose a parish or diocesan structure on Trinity College. It is from this perspective that the work connected with the Chapel is insistently being attempted. The Chapel is functionally sort of a Cathedral; the dormitories and fraternity houses are facsimiles of parishes. Hierarchical organizations of clubs with systems of officers and committees look good on reports to trustees. They are not generally effective, however, as illustrated by the majority vote of the fraternity and non-fraternity members of the Canterbury Club Executive Committee to dissolve the Canterbury Club structure.

Through the parochial organizations headed by the Chapel Cabinet (a sort of College of Cardinals) off campus charitable work and conferences are often subtly imposed upon well-meaning undergraduates as being worthwhile duties of a good Christian or Jew. And, in order to insure the prestige of the Chapel organization, present or potential "Big Men On Campus" are sought out to be placed in vital offices to fulfill the obligations and duties of the religious "organization man".

Trinity College is neither a place for a non-intellectual missionary effort nor for a "family". (Personally, the trite hyperbole "Trinity Family" is as sickening as "Neath the Elms" is traditional.) By definition a college is a "society of scholars incorporated for study and instruction." It is NOT a place wherein students are obligated to do "good works". If a student is conscientious in his studies and relationships with his peers, he will not have the time for such things. It is wrong to let students feel that they are shirking their Christian duties if they do not join the pious bandwagon. The Christian duty in college is performed in the lecture hall, the library, the laboratory, the gymnasium, the dormitory, and as a worshipper in the Chapel.

Religion has an important role in higher education both as an academic discipline of the humanities and as a real need and force in a student's life. Trinity College has a unique possibility "to promote the intellectual, physical, moral, and spiritual development of the young men entrusted to (its) care". Such a task, though, requires a balanced program that is consistent with the purposes of the liberal arts college. As a result of my observations during the past four years, I submit that the opportunities for the fulfillment of these possibilities are present in all areas directly associated with the college with the exception of those entrusted to the Chapel.

Richard T. Nolan