

Nov. 1952 Riley

INAUGURATION OF DR. JOHN RILEY
President Northwest Nazarene College

Mr. Chairman, President Riley, distinguished guests and friends of Northwest Nazarene College. It is a distinct honor to celebrate this significant occasion with you. My long and cherished friendship with Dr. Riley causes my heart to glow with pride in this honor that has come to him. And my deep and abiding interest in this great institution grows more personal and active as the years pass by.

First I offer my congratulations to you, President Riley, upon having been chosen to lead this growing institution to greater development within and farther expansion of its physical equipment and extension of its already far-reaching influence. You are in a succession of able men who have, by God's grace, built a college of distinctive purpose and laudable achievement. They have set a pattern for you to copy and a course for you to follow. To Mr. Emerson belongs much credit for providing faith and vision to launch the undertaking. Dr. H. Orton Wiley guided the infant college through very critical years and made outstanding contribution to its progress. Dr. R. V. DeLong brought financial stability and educational recognition by his able leadership. Your immediate predecessor, Dr. L. T. Corlett, in an administration of a decade in duration has led the college to an unprecedented position of respect in this community, this

educational zone, the entire Church of the Nazarene, and in the educational world. The foundations on which you stand today, Mr. President, are such that you can with safety and assurance build a magnificent superstructure thereon.

It is generally conceded to be an honor to be a college president. The position implies that one who holds it is a man of reliable and admirable character, that he possesses intellectual capacity and has attained a level of scholarship to grace the office and that he is a man endowed with leadership qualities. The fact that one is a college president is honorable.

But the position to which you have been chosen, Dr. Riley, has its peculiar distinctions. This is a Christian college. Its purpose is to build lives according to the ideals set forth by Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Its function is to prepare men and women for positions of responsibility in the homes, the schools, the churches of this nation and the world. And in doing this, leaders worthy to be trusted will be provided for community, state and nation.

We do not overlook the fact that this is a small church related college. Neither do we forget that a high percentage of outstanding citizens come from just such colleges as this. Therefore, it is certain that the quality of work done here will be effective to a measure that is out of proportion to the number of students enrolled. While we are concerned with the

size of the student body for obvious reasons, we are much more concerned about the quality of work done and the character of the output.

You are to be congratulated, President Riley, that you are head of an institution whose supreme purpose is to develop in its students the ability to think clearly, incisively and accurately, especially in the realm of moral and ethical standards and spiritual realities.

On March the thirteenth, 1951, Mrs. Williamson and I flew by T.W.A. Constellation from Lydda Israel to Rome. Our course took us over Crete and Greece. Since we were over the homeland of some of the world's greatest thinkers, when the steward came along to offer magazines to read, I chose THINK. It was the issue for February of that year. In it I found a very stimulating article entitled "The Ability to Think" by G. Lake Imes. Contained in it were some very appropriate ideas for discussion on an occasion of this kind since it is the particular function of a college to develop the capacity to think.

The first step in constructive thinking is to gather facts. It is admitted that the accumulation of facts to be filed away on cards or in notebooks or even in the brain cells is not the ultimate goal of college training. Yet it must be recognized that without such knowledge the growth of the higher powers of the mind is impossible. Hence, the necessity

of burning the midnight oil while toiling through assignments in history, language, mathematics, science, literature and philosophy. To the shortsighted zealot for action these subjects seem to be a boresome tedium unrelated to a life of service to God and man. But the serious-minded student sees in all his assignments an opportunity for mental discipline and, that, as steel sharpens steel, so the minds of thinkers who have written textbooks and who teach the subjects sharpens the mind and develop the intellectual capacity.

This, then, becomes the valid reason for the requirements that are made in the curricula of these institutions which offer liberal education in the arts and sciences. The short crosscuts to specialized training may speed the time of material productivity, but they will result in a dwarfed intellect, a narrow, straightened, unsympathetic soul and a life robbed of the enrichment which every educated person is entitled to enjoy. The final result will be a society in which a mechanistic system is in effect. In such a system the dignity and the worth of the individual man as a spiritual being made in the likeness of God will have little consideration.

Ability to think includes analysis, which means the possession of insight that enables one to determine the relation between the facts acquired. Some of these relations are obvious; others are subtle and are never discovered by the untrained mind. It is the responsibility of the professor to

teach and the student to learn the relation of the things taught. The professor of biology should have facility in relating his science to the fundamental doctrines of the Bible and the church. Otherwise he may unwittingly prepare the minds of his students without their awareness of it to accept those teachings that are inimical to fundamental Christian theology. This can be said also of those who teach history, philosophy, literature or any of the sciences. Indeed, without that ability to analyse and relate facts, even theology may be taught in such a manner as to leave the student so much at sea that he may write or speak things which in fact deny the very doctrines to which he has committed himself. Instances could be sighted in which ardent armenians have declared those things which can only fit into a calvinistic theology.

It is, therefore, of primary importance that the Christian student shall grasp the central truths that support his faith and relate all he learns to that concept. Therefore, in Northwest Nazarene College it is of great importance that our total teaching shall support and strengthen the fundamental truth of scriptural holiness. It must not pay lip service only. Rather, it must so vitalize and energize the doctrine that it will never become a platitude to anyone who responds to the atmosphere, embraces the ideals and follows the examples set before him on this campus, in these halls of learning or in the worship services. The force of truthfulness must ever characterize the truth we affirm.

Evaluation of facts is also an essential element in straight, clear thinking. The relative importance of the things learned must be decided. Accuracy in evaluation of facts will determine whether a character is deep or shallow, balanced or lopsided, pursuing a clear, shining pathway or off on a tangent that leads to darkness. It will either result in an egocentric life taken up with self-seeking, self-serving, self-gratification or self-pity, or it will produce a Christ-centered life of service to others and obedience to the will of God. It will determine whether a life is harassed and distraught by fear and fretting or one of adjustment and inward peace, sustained by faith and hope in the wisdom and goodness of God and his providences.

Imagination is included in the ability to think. It is the capacity of the mind to construct images of things which as yet are undiscovered or uncreated. Imagination is the main-spring for all creative thinking. A poem or a piece of music is first heard in the soul of the poet or the composer. All our modern scientific discoveries--radio, radar, television, atomic energy--were conceived in the minds of men who by experimentation have brought to light the things they believed possible long before they were known to the public. In like manner every movement or institution that has come into being for the moral, social and spiritual uplift of humanity was born of the spiritual vision of which the mind of man is capable. Without that

insight no churches would be built and no crusade for souls at home or abroad would be launched. Education that does not produce those possessed of the power of creative thinking is useless.

Finally, the ability to think must culminate in execution. Thinking which is only dreaming and contemplation is wholesome occupation for a time, but it must be changed into effective operation to accomplish good for others and the realization of the highest value for one's self. Therefore, our educational leaders have written into the proposed philosophy of education for the Church of the Nazarene the following paragraph. One objective to be sought is to "encourage students to develop the ability to weigh and discriminate values, to develop an appreciation for, and the understanding of the spiritual life, to challenge youth to see the necessity of Christian experience and to a full commitment to God for life and service." In a briefer statement, "the function of a college is to develop in youth the God-given capacity to think."

In a Christian college the greatest attainment in intellectual power is possible, for it is not only the training of the mind through human agencies, but also under the guidance of the Spirit of God. Dr. A. W. Tozer says in his book, "The Divine Conquest", "Reason, say the theologians, is one of the divine attributes. There need be no incompatibility between the deepest experiences of the Spirit and the highest attainments

of the human intellect. It is only required that the Christian intellect be fully surrendered to God, and there need be no limit to its activities beyond those imposed upon it by its own capacity. How cold and deadly is the unblessed intellect. A superior brain without the saving essence of godliness may turn against the human race and drench the world in blood, or worse, it may loose ideas into the earth which will continue to curse mankind for centuries after it has turned to dust again. But a Spirit-filled mind is a joy to God and a delight to all men of good will."

Fortunately, Northwest Nazarene College has held tenaciously to the idea which other older and larger centers of learning are seeking to recapture. Namely, that life is futile without faith in God, that the only adequate foundation for character is in the concepts that are incorporated in the teachings of the Christian religion, and furthermore, that the core of education is theology which is the queen of the sciences.

Dr. George Buttrick says, and I quote:

"If God is the sovereign fact for life, God is the sovereign fact for education; and if Christ is God's self-revelation for life, Christ is precisely that for education. The educator cannot ignore God. He can avow faith in God, or deny it, but he can hardly ignore it; for then he would be standing apart from one of the major issues of life and history, and he would be surrendering even his poor experimentalism to a tacit atheism. Nor can the educator be content to let the student add God as an extracurricular according to choice, for again this would be either atheism or the blasphemy which says of God: 'Season according to taste.' For if God is God, God cannot ever be merely an extra or an avocation. Avowed atheism of some kinds may win admiration,

as may an avowed faith in God. But to side-step the central issue, and to try to conduct anything (such as education) as if the central issue did not exist, is evasion. The uneasiness that comes of letting major issues go by default has fallen like mildew on our schools."

Again, my contratulations to you, Mr. President, that in your college God is the Sovreign fact for life and for education and Christ is God's self revelation for life and for education.

And now I wish to extend my congratulations to the college, including the Board of Regents, the faculty, the supporting constituency and the students of today and tomorrow upon the choice of Dr. John E. Riley as their president.

In no important point is this man lacking. He spent his childhood and youth in the rugged simplicity of a Nazarene parsonage. In his veins flows the blood of dauntless pioneers. Faith, courage, humility and disciplined self-denial were instilled into his mind by example and environment, as well as by inheritance. From childhood he has known the holy scriptures which have made him wise unto salvation.

His training is thorough and has been of the most desirable quality for his new position. His undergraduate study was in Eastern Nazarene College where his mind and spirit were tempered for service to a sister institution. His graduate work broadened his viewpoint, deepened his convictions and enriched his cultural preparation for life and leadership.

Dr. Riley's many years as a successful pastor in churches of ever growing importance has given him clear understanding of

of what the church which fosters this college expects of him. His recent association with this institution as pastor of the College church has afforded ample opportunity to know the exacting demands which will be made upon his time, strength and sagacity.

But more important than all else, Dr. Riley possesses the strength of character to perform his new duties with distinction. He is endowed with a spirit of discernment. He can see beyond the temporary and superficial issues and lay hold of things that are primary and permanent. He has demonstrated an unswerving loyalty to God, the church and its doctrines and ideals. His life is surrounded with an aroma of devotion to Christ and he has unhesitatingly broken the alabaster box of selfless service and joyful sacrifice. Furthermore, he has the capacity for ready adaptation to youthful minds and the skill to guide them in their development as free and independent, yet loyal, Christian personalities.

The president of a Nazarene College has the most exacting task of any man in the church. He must be a financier with the exceptional ability wisely to decide between what ought to be done and what must be done with limited resources. He must be a diplomat. That is one who can disagree with others without being disagreeable. He must live peaceably with students, faculty, regents, contributors, parents, officials of city, state and educational organizations, and all the while guide their decision by his own judgment.

The president of a college like this must be an administrator of extraordinary ability.

He must also be an example of all he hopes to see in those under his guidance. The most powerful influence that he will exert is his own example of Christlike living.

The responsibilities of this man are great, and his opportunity is equally great. He will have much to do with many lives and with their service to God, the church and their country. For faithfulness in this position there will be ample and eternal rewards.

To all who are present and all who are represented by them, I appeal for loyal co-operation in achieving the immediate and long-range objectives of Northwest Nazarene College.

And from you, Mr. President, all I require is the faithful performance of your duties as God may enable you.

I now take great pleasure in presenting to you Dr. John Eckel Riley, President of Northwest Nazarene College.