THE CONCEPT OF A COLLEGE

An acquaintance was explaining to me some of the trials of building a new home. It seems that his greatest problems arose because of a number of changes in the plans which were desired after the work began. He concluded with a comment something like this: "The best way to build a house is to get a good architect, be sure your plans are complete, and then leave town until the work is over."

This man was giving testimony to the value of a concept. If you want to build a house, it is a good thing to start with an idea of a house. It is not only good but necessary if, for example, you expect to receive a government loan, in which case plans meeting certain specifications have to be submitted and approved.

Just as it is understood that a house in mid-twentieth-century America is to have certain basic features, including considerably more than four walls and a roof, if it is to measure up at all to the accepted idea of a house, so it should be understood that a college is to partake of certain excellences which are commonly associated with the idea of college.

For a valid concept we have no alternative but to turn to the experts. According to them a college is essentially a community of scholars and learners engaged in examining, transmitting, interpreting and embellishing the cultural achievements of mankind. The distinctive activity is intellectual and the key personnel are scholars. We at Bryan recognize that there is a danger in this concept, but we do not see how college can be conceived in any other way. There is danger in constructing a house, but no builder of integrity shirks his appointed task because of the danger involved.

The key personnel are educators and the key educators are teachers. The teaching staff is the heart and core of the college. Whatever else goes on in the way of construction, fund-raising, extracurricular activity, athletics, even of religious testimony, the function of college as college is distinctively the one performed by the community of scholars.

This function concerns the cultural achievements of mankind. It involves the transmission of a body of knowledge, "bucket-filling," as it is sometimes called. But more important than the purveyance of knowledge is the training which the college provides in open-minded inquiry. The search for truth is necessarily involved in a community of scholars and learners who are minding their business. There is one sense in which truth is complete and final, and for us at Bryan the truth of God's special revelation of Himself in His Word is the most important truth in the world. But there is another kind of truth which is of importance, and it is the search for this kind of truth which is the peculiar function (Continued on page 4)
THE CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The Faculty Committee on University Development of Bryan University desires to emphasize anew the value of clear, well-defined concepts and the need for excellence in fulfilling them.

The committee believes that the function of Bryan University is definite. This school was called into existence as a college—a Christian liberal arts college. Being a college, it must provide an atmosphere in which inquiring minds may search, explore and know. Being Christian, it must at all times subscribe to and teach the truth of God’s Word, the Holy Scriptures, and it must endeavor to relate itself to all truth form the standpoint of this, God’s Special Revelation. Being a liberal arts college, Bryan University should also pursue consistently a program of higher learning in which a liberal arts curriculum is competently taught and studied. These are concepts.

Through this May issue of the Newslette, the members of the Faculty Committee on University Development further develop these concepts and seek to indicate some of the responsibilities of ourselves and of our friends in excellently fulfilling them.

The call of God has an important bearing on this subject. Bryan has a definite call from God to be a liberal arts college. It is evident that the other liquid ingredient, liberal arts, is cast out, or on the other hand, if it is left to continue as just such a liquid. If epoxy is desired, it is also evident that the other liquid ingredient, the Christian concept, cannot be cast out or be allowed to exist in isolation.

But the basic question before us is not adequately answered without facing this related question: how much of each ingredient produces this epoxy? Actually the illustration fails at this point, for obedience to a call and spirituality are not separate ingredients. If Bryan is not spiritual, it is not obeying its call. If Bryan is not obedient to its call to be a liberal arts college, it is not spiritual.

The story of epoxy illustrates that Bryan can fulfill its calling as a liberal arts college without sacrificing spirituality, and that Bryan must continue to claim the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
Gov. Austin Peay breaks ground for Administration Building.

University Develops Plant

The original plan for Bryan University was ambitious. It was conceived in response to the need for Christian scholarship in a materialistic generation. The physical plant was outlined with the understanding that an environment conducive to intellectual development was imperative. In March, 1927, in the initial step toward realizing this ambition, Governor Austin Peay of the state of Tennessee broke ground for the first of several proposed buildings to be located on the 82-acre wooded hilltop overlooking Dayton. Upon its completion this building was to have accommodated “four hundred students in all departments of college life and activity.”

It has been said that it is easier to build a road than to think where it should go. In the case of Bryan University, building has been a continuing problem. The depression and the war with its curtailment of construction interrupted the fulfillment of the plans for the physical plant. In recent years, however, the development of more adequate facilities has been pressed by the Board of Trustees and the Administration. The exterior of that first building begun by Governor Peay has been completed and at the present time work is going on in the lobby and library areas. It is hoped that by the beginning of the 1956-57 session the library will be located in new, well-equipped quarters, providing the students with vastly improved surroundings for learning. This is a welcomed and valued development since library facilities have much to do with determining the benefits of training in an educational institution. A beginning has been made, but we realize that there is considerable amount of work yet to be done. For the science students there must be more adequately equipped laboratories and field facilities; for the students of languages and the humanities there must be provided record libraries, as well as an increased number of books; for the students of music, additional practice rooms and instruments are necessary. For all members of a growing student body the provision of adequate dormitories and a gymnasium are the high priority essentials.

ARE WE WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE?

“Hospital Costs Up” was the caption of a recent article in a leading magazine. Although the fact was deplored, the article concluded as follows: “If they were to cut payrolls, hospitals would lose competent people, lower efficiency, undermine the care of the sick.” Hospital and patient must continue to pay the price if services and results are to be the same.

A similar situation exists in Christian education today: ascending costs confront the institution while greater demands than ever before are being made upon it. It is a well-known fact that many religious groups tax themselves heavily to build and equip and maintain fine schools in order to educate their people. The Communists are willing to endure great trouble and expense for the training of the young people in the party.

If such groups are willing to exact themselves, how much more should the evangelical public be exercised by the great responsibility to undertake and support Christian education? The need is great! Are you willing to pay the price?

A solemn responsibility rests upon a Christian institution. It is incumbent upon it, not only to operate on sound business principles, but also to present its claims and needs urgently and attractively. The Christian public has the right to expect Christ-centered institutions to send forth well-trained, highly qualified graduates.

Bryan University was chartered “for the purpose of establishing, conducting and perpetuating a University for the higher education of men and women under auspices distinctly Christian and spiritual, as a testimony to the supreme glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Divine inspiration and infallibility of the Bible.” If it is to succeed in fulfilling its purpose as a Christ-centered liberal arts college and attain the place of academic leadership it should have under God, the university must have the whole-hearted support of those who are of like mind in Christ. Since Bryan University has a positive Christian ministry, it deserves the support of the people of God. As a well-known Christian educator has said, “...the responsibility for the present status of teaching must be shared by the public.” Are we willing to pay the price?
one teaches us its significance. If one desires to minister even in the United States, which has a very complex culture pattern, one needs to have as broad a background as possible. When I say minister, I do not refer primarily to the ministerial profession, but to the ministry of the gospel whether it be by a lawyer, Sears clerk, or scrub woman.

The ideal human being is the one who is fulfilling these four responsibilities. It is the burden of the Christian college to provide a curriculum and educative process which will, in cooperation with the working of God, produce this type of individual.

Liberal arts? Yes!

THE CONCEPT OF A COLLEGE

(Continued from page 1)

of the college and university. This second kind of truth concerns the relation of ideas and things, and it is discovered through intuition and by analysis. Its areas are philosophy, literature, the natural sciences, and the social sciences. Research is only part of the pursuit of this truth, and not the most important part. Analysis, the art of thinking, is the most important part. If we have any doubt about the value of seeking truth by investigation, let us consider the blessings of medical science; but let us remember that the spirit of independent inquiry, not mere research in the sense of the manipulation of techniques, has laid the groundwork for the spectacular advance of medical knowledge.

The function of the college needs to be understood and appreciated. Who in evangelical circles has not learned by experience the blight of closed-mindedness? As religious persons we are always facing the temptation of attributing to God our prejudices. A service which the liberal arts college is prepared to render is the promotion of a frame of mind whereby reason may be substituted for passion in controversy, whereby evidences can be discovered in a spirit of fair play before prejudice forces a quick conclusion. This can be done in entire loyalty to the fundamentals of the faith. In fact, the question arises: can one really be loyal to Christ, who is Himself truth, if one's judgment is habitually distorted by prejudice and self-interest?