

# RELIGION

*Journal of Kansas*



VOL. 17

No. 4

JULY 1980

## SPECIAL ANNUAL REPORT ISSUE

### Programs for 1980

The programs currently carried by the Kansas School of Religion are listed below. Interested contributors may designate gifts as they wish.

1. **Religion Journal of Kansas**, an 8 to 12-page popular quarterly of which 9000 copies are distributed to religious and educational leaders.
2. **Kansas Religious Leadership Conference**, a one-week summer continuing education experience, planned principally by Kansas pastors.
3. **Public Education Religion Program**, maintains the Kansas Center for Public Education Religion Studies, provides resources for summer courses in Lawrence and other cities for elementary and secondary school religion teachers, and furnishes the national office for the National Council on Religion and Public Education.
4. **Lecture Program**, provides visiting lecturers for religious studies curriculum and underwrites such institutes as Archaeology and the Bible, Religion and World Crises.
5. **Student Scholarships**, finances the KSR Scholar program which currently awards four scholarships a year to KU religion students.
6. **Religion Library**, provides new books to the School of Religion library which currently houses 10,000 volumes in Smith Hall; and provides some staff assistance. Library is used by the Department of Religious Studies.
7. **Faculty Travel**, supplements university allotment for travel by religious studies faculty to scholarly meetings.
8. **Smith Hall**, while the university provides utilities and janitor in return for free use of the building, capital repair and exterior maintenance of the building are supported by the School of Religion.

#### KANSAS SCHOOL OF RELIGION BOARD OF TRUSTEES 1979-1980

**Mrs. Irma Smith**, *Macksville*  
**William Fletcher**, *Lawrence*  
**Donald Hammerli**, *Salina*  
**W.C. Hartley**, *Paola*  
**Homer Henderson**, *Lawrence*  
**Howard Hurwitz**, *Lawrence*  
**Clifford Hope, Jr.**, *Garden City*  
**Richard Johnson**, *Lawrence*  
**Walter League**, *Leavenworth*  
**Rose O'Brien**, *Topeka*  
**S. Lee Pfohl**, *Independence, MO*  
**Ronald Reed**, *Topeka*  
**Robert Roth**, *Larned*  
**Irvin Youngberg**, *McLouth*  
**Dale Weller**, *Great Bend*  
**Allen Wiechert**, *Lawrence*

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**President—Howard Hurwitz**  
**Vice-President—Ronald Reed**  
**Secretary—Homer Henderson**  
**Treasurer—Irvin Youngberg**  
**Executive Director—Lynn Taylor**

#### BURNING BUSH SOCIETY

*Representing individual donors*

**President—Joe Garrison**, *Topeka*  
**Vice-President—Ron Cobb**, *Topeka*  
**Secretary—Virginia Rice**, *Kansas  
City*

**Treasurer—Harry Wiles**, *Topeka*

#### FELLOWSHIP OF MOSES

*Representing organized religious groups*

**President—William Arnold**,  
*Lawrence*  
**Secretary—Phil Montgomery**,  
*Lawrence*

# THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT IN THE AGING

Reuel L. Howe

*Reuel Howe, former Director of the Institute for Advanced Pastoral Studies, Bloomfield Hills, MI., delivered lectures on Ministry in Aging at United Theological Seminary, New Brighton, MN. The seminary published the following lecture in its Theological Markings. We reprint with permission.*

The power of the spirit is unquestionable. Where there is spirit there is life, and where there is not spirit there is no life. It is that simple. The text for this comes from the third chapter of II Corinthians: "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." Freedom from what? Freedom from oppression; freedom from the oppression of our fears, of our faults, of our infirmities, and of our limitations. While people do not look like they are oppressed, I know they are.

I am not speaking here of the external oppressions in the political or prejudicial arena, but rather of our internal oppressions which keep us imprisoned: images of ourselves, other people's images of us, and their expectations of us that keep us from being free. I believe that we can respond to these oppressions in ways that cause destructive aging or in ways that can result in positive creative aging.

Early in my ministry I first witnessed the power of the spirit on people who were suffering and terminally ill. As temporary chaplain it was my duty to visit the patients and provide companionship, care, and the comfort of religion. I discovered there were at least two kinds of people there. First were the people who were utterly defeated by their life and suffering. They were bitter and angry. They showed their resentment of nurses and other caretakers by their irritability and trouble-making. I could visit only two or three of these people at one time because they were so emotionally draining. These people had a destructive effect on themselves and others so that they received few visitors and were lonely.

## Spirit of life

I found another kind of person too. I can remember even now, many years later, a lovely woman who, when I walked in, would greet me with a smile. She was suffering just as much as the others and she had only a little time to live. Usually when I visited her she would ask me what I was doing or whether there was anything new. She was eager for input in her life from outside her present limitations. Her attitude so renewed me that I could resume visiting the other kind of patient. There were others like her.

The presence or absence of spirit can make a dramatic difference in people's responses to their tragedy and pain. Those who held onto their spirit were alive, living, even finding enjoyment in life, whereas others surrendered whatever spirit responses they may have had. What is the spirit that

keeps people alive? It is the spirit of life: a passion for living, interests, feelings, longings, objectives, hope in spite of despair and love given and received. It is the spirit of God implicit in his creation and it is the Holy Spirit, the special gift we have from Christ. But I cannot think of the Holy Spirit as functioning only under religious auspices. We need to broaden our concepts so that we can have a sense that when the Savior came and did his work, he left his spirit with us; he left it in the world.

We who are his followers should be specialists in responding to the spirit, but never monopolists of the spirit. The gift was given to us but it is available to all. Some people respond to the spirit of life, perhaps not knowing that they are responding to the Holy Spirit, but I believe that anyone who keeps himself or herself open to the creative possibilities is living in the spirit of God.

In the spirit we are made alive no matter what our creaturely circumstances are. The creaturely circumstances can be utterly defeating. I am thinking of a statement in Becher's book, *The Denial of Death*, where he asks these questions: What does it mean to be a creature? What does it mean to be human? It means to have emerged from nothing. It means to have a name. It means to have a growing consciousness of self. It means to have deep inner feeling. It means to have an excruciating inner yearning for life and self expression. It means perhaps that one has made progress in that expression. Yet, finally, it means to die.

Sometimes it does seem unjust, crazy, insane, that we only have a few minutes to live with all of that task to accomplish. Indeed, I feel that after more than 70 years I am only now prepared to live, and yet I have to die. There is something ironic about that. If one is allowed to ask questions, this is the one I want to ask: Why? All that effort for so short a time; just when you are ready, out you go. Many people are oppressed by that condition but they do not know it. I find that a good deal of human behavior is an attempt on the part of human beings to hide from their mortality, as well as from the pain of living.

## Evading truth

Life becomes a way of evading the truth about our creatureliness, and thus we hide from the fear of our death with a sense of futility. Without the power of the spirit renewing our spirit we are lost.

The nature of our aging and how we are when we

---

**"Awareness, filtered through the spirit of a responsive person, can produce a life that is strong, mellow, creative, insightful, and courageous."**

---

are aged is determined by whether we are running from the frightening truths about our creatureliness or whether we are dealing with them day by day, month by month, year by year and not allowing them to overcome us.

There are ways by which we hide from our creatureliness. We can do it by **repression**, by fighting any kind of awareness of who we are, what we are, where we come from, where we are going, what we are experiencing, what we are feeling and so on. The therapeutic process can demonstrate how successful human beings are in hiding from painful truths about themselves. We also hide by being **exclusionists**, by shutting out anything that is new or different or disturbing through prejudice, opinion, dogmatism, resentment, hostility. Or we hide from our fear and despair by **unresponsiveness** to events, or by a negative responsiveness to events, persons, ideas, or the arts that reveal so much of what is happening in human life. Or we can hide from our fear and despair by making **play-safe decisions**: Our goal is security, not life. We are born to life, but yet one of the things we most fear is living.

I had a conversation ~~not~~ long ago with a man who said he was afraid to live. "I am afraid of what it will require of me; I am afraid of what I will have to experience with people. It is easier not to live, just exist." He was an intelligent, educated person from whom you would expect a more courageous response. In these ways we seek security and assurance and cut ourselves off from the sources of inspiration, renewal, transformation, and growth. Such self-imposed deprivation produces negative aging and we become dispirited persons.

When people, by their way of living, destroy their spirit, they can only become aware of the limitations of their situation. They have lost any sense of possibility and are embarked on a self-defeating way of living. Whenever yearning for life and enthusiasm has been turned into despair and anxiety, negative aging is accelerated and exaggerated.

There are spiritual dynamics in aging. Spirit gives life. Life is spirit responding to spirit. Spirit is true in all relationships. Christ, who took unto himself our tragic creatureliness and who gave us his spirit, can free us from negative aging and lead us into creative aging. Living in response to the spirit is a way of living courageously.

### Awareness

What are the ways? I suggest four. First, living in the spirit means living with **awareness**. Awareness is a peculiar gift of human beings. We live with awareness when we have eyes that see and ears that hear. It takes courage to overcome our fear to see and our fear to hear. It takes courage to receive or respond to what we see and hear, to be aware of who

we are, who others are and are not, and what is going on between us. It takes courage of the spirit to be aware of tragedy and frustration in life, and to be aware of the joy, of the potential for fulfillment, and of the possibilities. Awareness makes possible the assimilation of meaning, no matter what it is. Awareness, filtered through the spirit of a responsive person, can produce a life that is strong, mellow, creative, insightful, and courageous. That is a tremendous thing to achieve for the little time that we have to live. So test your power of awareness in terms of how free your eyes are to see, and your ears to hear. When we think about listening, for example, what do we listen with?

I have become interested in being aware of what I listen with at different times. Do I listen with my defensiveness? If I do, then I don't have any energy to send out toward anyone else because my energy will be focused on the care of myself.

---

**"When you listen with love it means listening without expectation of reward. So much of our loving is done in order to be rewarded for it."**

---

Do I listen with my anger? When I listen with my anger, my energy is focused on myself because my anger is taking care of my hurt. Do I listen with my guilt? When guilt works in one, there is no energy available for building bridges toward the other person. When we listen with such feelings, we defeat our listening because we do not hear anything—we only hear ourselves.

If, however, we listen out of our vulnerabilities, we can listen with compassion, a passion to be with people in whatever state they are; then we are sending energy from within toward them and building a bridge of compassion between them and us. It is a wonderful thing to be able to listen with compassion because compassion makes genuine care of another possible no matter how difficult the task of caring. Without compassion our self-preoccupation makes caring impossible.

### Understanding

Or, I can listen with understanding. To listen with understanding means to "stand under" and give support, even to people with whom you disagree. Then it is especially important to learn where they are coming from and why they say and believe as they do. That may make a great difference in the nature of the disagreement. And so another door is opened toward effective communication. Also, listen with love. When you listen with love, it means listening without expectation of reward. So much of our loving is done in order to be rewarded for it. When we seek to love because the other is there to be loved, we are moving from **eros** to **agape**; that is, moving toward the kind of loving we expect from God: He loves without expectation of reward.

I was first taught that **agape** was impossible for human beings; they could only love with the self-

centeredness of **eros**. But I have seen human beings love selflessly. I have received that kind of love from others, and I believe I have given it. When it happens, I believe God is finding a way he can love through us. It is a vocation we can have for God and others with his help. And often we can expect what he receives instead of reward, namely, abuse and criticism. Too much of our talk about Christian love is sentimental and sensual and is tested by those situations when the response to our loving hurts.

So, what do you listen with? Do you listen with the feelings inside that are taking care of you, or do you listen with those capacities that move your power of being, the power of your person out into the arena where other persons are in need of what you can give? That kind of person, I believe, will grow older with more power, whereas the other person grows feebler the more he concentrates on the feeding and care of himself. It is a paradox.

### Inclusiveness

A second way for my spirit to respond to spirit is by the practice of **inclusiveness**, that is, being open to new experiences, new people, new values, new ideas, new ways of doing. How easy it is to fall into ruts and gradually become locked into what we already know, believe, and do. Novelty and change are refreshing for the mind and body and, therefore, for the soul. They are essential for creative living.

We need to have an inclusive attitude toward innovations that may be presented to us. Can we assimilate the new which may mean discarding some part of the old that has been important to us? People who have this capacity will probably age creatively and enjoy their lives to the end.

Living in response to the spirit also means living **responsibly**, accepting what happens and letting the spirit call you into a new response. The important thing is not what happens to us but what we do in response to what happens to us. That is what determines who we become.

---

#### **"How reassuring it is to read in the Gospels how Jesus was afraid, and how he leaned into his fears!"**

---

Valeta, my wife, and I had an interesting experience last summer in California. We spent some time with Ann O'Hanlon, a very creative artist and philosopher. One morning she was experimenting with a new medium and a large sheet of paper. She was quite pleased with what was happening. Suddenly she stopped and indicated she didn't like what had happened. I asked what was wrong with it and she said, "It isn't what I was expecting." I asked if she were going to throw it away and she said, "I never throw anything away. You can't throw anything away in life when you do it. Instead I need to ask myself what needs to be added to make it something more than it is." As I thought about this I gained a new insight and understanding.

In the course of my ministry I have heard many people say such things as, "I wish I could undo parts

---

#### **"Our congregations are filled with people who do not share their vulnerabilities; therefore, there is little trust and shallow fellowship."**

---

of my life; I wish I could start over again; I wish I wasn't stuck with parts of my past." We all have a sense of being locked into what has happened, into decisions we made in the past that now seem wrong. We wish for freedom from bondage of our past. I believe that the Lord spoke to us through Ann. The message was: The only thing I or we can do about the past is to add to it the best we can and in that way make our life more than it was. And we can ask the Lord for help in doing it. That message is good news. It is movement into possibilities which seem impossible. So often when we think in terms of our past the possible seems impossible. But this insight opens a door to the possibility of the impossible. To me this is a helpful way of dealing with what happens to us.

### Courage

The fourth response to the spirit is to live **courageously**, willing to risk while accepting the limitations and moving through them to new possibilities. It is a dangerous way of life, which is why most people seem to draw back from it—they are afraid. However, as I have stated before in these lectures, the answer to fear is to lean into it. Do not let your fear dominate you. Fear can hold you captive so that you are oppressed and imprisoned by it. On the other hand, if you lean into your fear, you become its governor, its controller. You, not your fears, make your decisions. How wonderful it is to make your own decisions rather than having your fear decide for you! But it takes courage because the enemy, fear, is strong. I feel that the spirit gives me the courage to lean into my fear.

How reassuring it is to read in the Gospels how Jesus was afraid, and how he leaned into his fears! But beyond fear and death was resurrection. We have his words and his act of risk as the promise that leaning into our fears is the way to go.

These are the ways in which we can open ourselves to the spirit who will help us through our crises. Our crises, fears and terrors are an inevitable part of our lives, but we can move through our fears, we can deal with them, and we can use them as a curriculum for our learning. By responding to the spirit we open our lives to what seem to be impossible possibilities.

I have three affirmations that have come to mean a great deal to me. I think they can help us in creative aging. The first affirmation is, "I am \_\_\_\_\_." (Here we say whatever weakness or liability we seem to have. For example, "I am afraid," "I am defensive," "I am guilt ridden," etc.) We need to start at this point because we do not make progress until we accept ourselves and our vulnerabilities with honesty. This also follows our Christian belief of the necessity for confession. It is also an attitude that enables us to develop relationships.

---

## Trust

For instance, I am aware of the lack of trust in a group when I begin a conference. Only after they and I have shared some of our vulnerabilities can the conferees begin to work at a level where the goals of the conference can be reached. If we cannot admit and share our vulnerabilities, we do not trust. If we do not trust, our alternative is to pretend to be what we are not, and open fellowship becomes impossible. Our deepest longing—being known by each other—is never realized. Our congregations are filled with people who do not share their vulnerabilities; therefore, there is little trust and shallow fellowship.

After getting our first affirmation clearly in focus, we move on to the second affirmation: "I am **more** than that," (more than our weakness and deficiency). One of the exciting things about the record of Jesus and his relationships to people is how he was always looking for and calling forth more in people than they had yet realized. He chose Peter, a loveable, impulsive, emotional, unstable human being, and he named him The Rock.

---

**"... it is good for us to look for it, and to remember that a person is a child of God with unknown possibilities, regardless of condition."**

---

He chose Peter because he saw a quality in him beyond the obvious weaknesses and Jesus called it forth. Again and again this seems to be what Jesus was doing. He turned to people who had been rejected or put in the category of deficient and he saw the possibilities in them and invited them into a relationship with him. That is our great vocation—to see the more in ourselves and in others. It is an exciting experience when that happens. There have been people in my life who have done that for me and it has been a source of power all of my life. It is also possible to look for the more in situations. That is what the artist was doing when she was working in her studio, seeing the more in something that at first looked pretty grim, or seeing the possibilities in something one thought was a mistake.

This has a lot to do with how one ages and how you can help others age. When I am in a nursing home, for instance, and I see the residents, it is awfully hard to see that there is more there than the often miserable picture they present. Sometimes we are unable to call it forth, but it is good for us to look for it, and to remember that a person is a child of God with unknown possibilities, regardless of condition. We need people in this society who have that kind of view, that kind of searching, that kind of willingness to help people become.

The third affirmation is: "Out of the more that I am I will relate to my life and to the people and circumstances in it." Many years ago when I was teaching at the seminary I had an altercation with my 14-year-old son who became so disgusted with me that he stormed out of my study and slammed the door behind him. I was left feeling like a lousy parent.

---

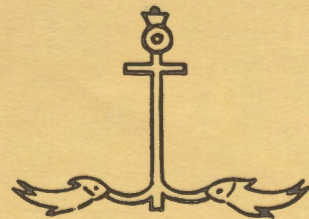
**"I know what my vulnerabilities are, but I am more than that, and out of that more, I will re-relate to my life, and to the people and circumstances in it."**

---

There was no mistaking how I felt about myself. He was right and I was wrong. While I was suffering and feeling very vulnerable, a couple came to the door to keep an appointment that I had made earlier. I was in no mood at that point to carry out my obligation to them and was even more distressed when they indicated that the problem they wanted to discuss was in relation to their son. Feeling thoroughly incompetent, I told them that I did not know if I could help them because I had just failed with my own son. The woman quickly replied, "Well, let's try. At least you will be humble."

We talked out their situation and that seemed to be of some help to them, but meanwhile in the back of my mind was the heaviness I felt in relation to my own son. The session apparently helped me as much as them because when they left, I discovered I was more than an adequate parent. Something in the process of talking had called forth in me that which was more than I was feeling when they came. I immediately went out and looked for my son and found him under a tree. I sat down and we talked together. He still remembers the occasion and our reconciliation, although neither of us can recall the problem itself. This is what I mean by re-relating. When we relate to others out of the more we are, the possibilities of transformation are increased. I believe also that when we act out of that more, we are participating in God's redeeming work.

I am what my vulnerabilities are, but I am more than that, and out of that more, I will re-relate to my life, and to the people and circumstances in it. This is a way of living my creaturely personal life in relation to other persons, and I believe that if I will live these three affirmations, the spirit of God will keep me creatively alive as I grow older.



# Friends, to whom we are grateful

## WE'RE INDEBTED

The School of Religion gratefully acknowledges its friends whose support makes the programs possible.

### BURNING BUSH SOCIETY

Mr. & Mrs. V.P. Allbert, *Hoyt*  
 Warren D. Andreas, *Winfield*  
 Mrs. Joseph Atha, *Shawnee Mission*  
 Jeff Bangert, *Lawrence*  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard Barger, *Lawrence*  
 Mrs. James Berryman, *Ashland*  
 Mrs. H.C. Bolyard, *Topeka*  
 Mrs. D.S. Bradford, *Palo Alto, CA*  
 John & Karin Bungard, *Anaheim, CA*  
 Mr. & Mrs. Riley Burcham, *Lawrence*  
 Senator Frank Carlson, *Concordia*  
 Mr. & Mrs. John W. Cain, Jr., *Mission Hills*  
 Jesse L. Carney, *Lawrence*  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ivan F. Chaney, *Horton*  
 Dr. & Mrs. Orlo Choguill, *Topeka*  
 Mrs. Carroll Clark, *Lawrence*  
 Mrs. Pearl Clark, *Lawrence*  
 Dr. & Mrs. Ron Cobb, *Topeka*  
 Barbara M. Craig, *Lawrence*  
 Dr. & Mrs. O.R. Cram, *Larned*  
 Mattie Crumrine, *Lawrence*  
 Dr. & Mrs. D.H. Davis, *Larned*  
 Ruth Deer, *Neodesha*  
 Dorothy A. Dixon, *St. John, MO*  
 John F. Eberhardt, *Wichita*  
 Mr. & Mrs. Paul Endacott, *Bartlesville, OK*  
 Edna M. Ewert, *Peabody*  
 Harry Faris, *Hutchinson*  
 Alanson Foreman, *Valley Center*  
 Rev. & Mrs. Phillip Friedeman, *Newton, IA*  
 Genevieve Funk, *Topeka*  
 E.C. Garrison, *Osborne*  
 Joe Garrison, *Topeka*  
 Mr. & Mrs. M.R. Golly, *Leawood*  
 Ronald Graham, *Lexington, KY*  
 Mrs. & Mrs. Alfred J. Graves  
 Mr. & Mrs. Brook L. Haines, *Lee's Summit, MO*  
 Mr. & Mrs. William W. Hambleton, *Lawrence*  
 Merlin C. Harness, *Overland Park*  
 Larry & Karen Heeb, *Lawrence*  
 Clifford R. Hope, Jr., *Garden City*  
 Mr. & Mrs. Howard Hurwitz, *Lawrence*  
 Robert M. Hull, *Kansas City*  
 Mr. & Mrs. Clifford Jones, *Shawnee Mission*

Mabel Jensen, *Burns*  
 Dr. & Mrs. H.P. Jones, *Lawrence*  
 Mr. & Mrs. A.H. Knoeber, *Salina*  
 Mr. & Mrs. L.A. Laybourn, *Sun City, AZ*  
 Walter B. League, *Leavenworth*  
 Ronald A. Lively, *Wichita*  
 Maurice V. McDonald, *Beloit*  
 Mr. & Mrs. John McLaughlin, *Longmont, CO*  
 Mrs. George T. McNair, *Lawrence*  
 Constance E. Martin, *Topeka*  
 Lavern E. Mausolf, *Prairie Village*  
 Evelyn Meade, *Topeka*  
 Mr. & Mrs. Dwight Metzler, *Topeka*  
 Mona M. Millikan, *Atlanta, GA*  
 Mr. & Mrs. Philip R. Montgomery, *Lawrence*  
 Daniel L. Mott, *Onaga*  
 Dr. & Mrs. E.G. Neighbor, *Shawnee Mission*  
 Dr. & Mrs. G.P. Neighbor, *Shawnee Mission*  
 Rev. & Mrs. William J. Nelsen, *Marion*  
 Irene Nunemaker, *New York, NY*  
 Mrs. Rose W. O'Brien, *Topeka*  
 Mary Alice Pacey, *Washington*  
 Mrs. M.D. Penner, *Crowley, LA*  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard M. Raney, *Lawrence*  
 Mr. & Mrs. Elmo Rankin, *Clay Center*  
 Mr. & Mrs. Owen C. Rawlings, *Marshall, MO*  
 Mr. H.W. Reece, *Scandia*  
 Mrs. Carl V. Rice, *Kansas City, KS*  
 Mr. & Mrs. Delmar Riney, *Pratt*  
 Ralph S. Ring, *Lawrence*  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert E. Roth, *Larned*  
 Dr. & Mrs. Sydney O. Schroeder, *Lawrence*  
 Todd & Jeannot Seymour, *Lawrence*  
 R.V. Shrewder, *Ashland*  
 Sara Fair Sleeper, *Alden*  
 Mr. & Mrs. Alan Sleeper, *Alden*  
 Frances B. Smith, *Austin, TX*  
 Mr. & Mrs. Ronald N. Smith, *Austin, TX*  
 Irma I. Smith, *Macksville*  
 Charles D. Stough, *Lawrence*  
 Dr. M.M. Swan, *Great Bend*  
 Dr. & Mrs. Lynn Taylor, *Lawrence*  
 Mrs. Grant Wagner, *Hutchinson*  
 Paul Walmer, *Gardner*  
 Rev. & Mrs. Lester M. Weeks, *Platte City, MO*  
 Mrs. Frank L. Wells, *Lyons*  
 Allen S. Wilber, *Scarsdale, NY*  
 Mr. & Mrs. Irvin Youngberg, *McLouth*  
 Charlton, Holmes, Peck & Brown, *Lawrence*  
 Dane G. Hansen Foundation, *Logan*  
 Garvey Foundation, *Wichita*

Farmers Bank & Trust Company, *Gardner*  
 Fink Foundation, *Topeka*  
 First National Bank & Trust, *Great Bend*  
 First State Bank, *Healy*  
 Garvey Foundation, *Wichita*  
 The Marley Fund, *Mission*  
 Muchnic Foundation, *Atchison*  
 Charles H. Taylor Memorial Trust, *St. Joseph, MO*

### RELIGIOUS BODIES PARTICIPATING

Christian Church in Kansas (Disciples of Christ)  
 Church of the Covenant, *Junction City*  
 Episcopal Church, Diocese of Kansas  
 First Christian C.W.F., *Salina*  
 First Methodist Church, *El Dorado*  
 Jewish Chautauqua Society  
 Kansas B'nai Brith  
 Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, Kansas District  
 Plymouth Congregational Church, *Lawrence*  
 Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, World Headquarters  
 United Methodist Church, Kansas East Conference  
 United Presbyterian Church, Synods of Mid-America  
 Women of Plymouth Congregational, *Lawrence*



# TRAVERSE LOG

A mood of conservatism is covering religious organizations like the dew covers Dixie. This is a time of such rapid change that I can't be wrong for very long even if I try. But I observe right now that the thrust of religion has turned conservative.

The recent insistence in Southern Baptist seminaries to enforce strict interpretation of the Bible is an illustration. The movement by conservatives who flattened the question of ordination of homosexuals in Presbyterian and Episcopal camps is another. So is the excommunication of Mormon Sonia Johnson on ERA activity. The verdict of heresy against liberal Hans Kung by the Vatican, the moving of Robert Drinan out of politics, show the direction within Catholicism.

We don't hear much from activists like Kundler and the Berrigans of earlier days, liberals like Dewart and Robinson and Pike do not have present-day clones. To some people their books are now dry as a school board brunch.

Fundamentalist groups grow in size, the rate is as high as an elephant's eye, meanwhile, many mainline and liberal churches are losing members.

The political playing field is staging new national team consortia working for prayers (back) in public schools. The players are well coached. Religion has turned right.

What all this means is not clear. It could be interpreted as a healthy restoration of neglected old values in American life. There are joyous people who take hope from this that at last somebody is going to ride shotgun on public morals. Some are hopeful of building a religious foundation for the American ethos. Religion to them is no longer a ring around the collar of government needing to be washed out.

Or it might mean that religious people have wearied of issues and "social gospel." Their minds wandered from the Bermuda triangle of radical causes.

Or it could suggest a pendulum swing of interest toward personal salvation, a concentration on individual souls rather than on program promotion.

Maybe it includes all of the above and indicates we do not yet have the comprehensive formula for truth. Religion may be more inclusive than we thought and we are still looking for all of it. After all, heresy is not false truth, it is truth in singularity. It is saying one bit of it is the whole.

It requires more than the tuba player to make an orchestra.

L F T

**RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

July 21-25

at GSP Residence Hall, The University of Kansas

**A Community of More in an Age of Less**

Bible Alive, Richard Jeske, Philadelphia  
Inclusive Worship, Marjie Bertsch, Susan Elkins, Rose Tomlin, Kansas  
Community Experiences, Richard Orr,  
Life Simulation, Richard Tombaugh, St. Louis

**Total cost: \$90.00; write 1300 Oread, Lawrence, KS 66045, phone 913-843-7257****RELIGION**

(USPS 460-280)

Published quarterly in October, January, April and July by Kansas School of Religion at The University of Kansas at Lawrence, Kansas 66045.

Editor, Lynn Taylor  
Editorial Coordinator,  
Nancy Colyer

MILLER, TIMOTHY  
RELIGION