

RELIGION

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Mainline Churches Stymie Theology

Mainline churches are foundering. They are buffeted on the one hand by humanism and on the other by fundamentalism. Their response to the neo-fundamentalist movement (well described in Jerry Falwell's book, *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon*) has been stunned silence.

We seem to know that fundamentalism is theologically counter to historical Christianity, a form of self-serving individualism and singularism, and of exclusivist, privatistic notions of salvation; it seems to give Christ the role of bouncer at the door of an exclusivist club of those who share some rather clearly defined emotional experiences and who recite some rather narrowly conceived statements of belief. Those who have that ID card the fundamentalist Christ calls sheep, but those without it He calls goats.

The Problem

I suggest that the basic problem in the current situation is that late-20th-century Western Christians are destitute theologically. Karl Barth died in December 1968 and with him new-orthodoxy. Nothing has arisen to take its place. The most articulate theological position these days and the best thought-out is process theology which many of us find inadequate to express the heart and essence of Christianity in the late 20th century. The rest is fragmented, perhaps addressing specific problems in culture and society clearly underscored in the Bible, but recognizably inadequate to address the ambiguity of reality. Martin Marty makes the point about fragmentation on



The Kansas School of Religion's annual lecture was delivered by James A. Sanders, president of the Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center for Preservation and Research. He is also a professor of intertestamental and biblical studies at the School of Theology at Claremont, Ca., and a professor of religion at the Claremont Graduate School. The following article was condensed by Gordon Wiseman who recently retired from the physics and astronomy department at the University of Kansas. He has served on the KSR Board of Trustees.

the theological scene with some regularity; and he is right. He is also right when he says that we have now embarked on a "mighty battle for the Bible."

Humanism on the left and fundamentalism on the right appear in many cultures today to be the only viable alternatives. According to a recent book edited by Lionel Caplan of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, *Studies in Religious Fundamentalism*, fundamentalism is a world-wide phenomenon. The various chapters deal with fundamentalism in Islam, Wahabism, Judaism, the Sikh religion, Hinduism in Sri Lanka, as well as Protestantism in South India and in the USA. They all seem to have arisen in response to the tremendous fears brought on by the invention of the atomic bomb with its threat of total annihilation, aided and abetted now by the spread of AIDS and other viruses insensitive to the so-called miracle drugs. These fears are then conjoined to the earlier shift in world-view of the Enlightenment. Nearly every vision or myth by which societies have been organized in the past seems threatened by the so-called advances of science. Out of fear that the various societies and their social structures and institutions based on them are threatened, there is a retrenchment of effort going on all over the world to save the old visions and world-views which appear to be crumbling.

Folk all over the world are grasping at the old, simple answers to new and strange complex questions. There is apparently a massive reaction deep in the psyche to anything strange or new. The various fundamentalist movements around the world seem to provide the clearest answers: reaction to the new along with reversion to the social structures of an earlier day.

But I am not defining fundamentalism as the real problem. The problem is the failure of the mainline churches, Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant, as well as Judaism to respond thoughtfully and theologically to this world wide 20th-century phenomenon. Since fundamentalism claims to be based on Scripture, let us turn there for some basic observations on how historic Judaism and Christianity might respond to the fundamentalist challenge of our time.

The Strangeness of the Bible

The Bible can be a prophetic voice. Observations about its strangeness start with recognition of its being a product of the early histories of believing communities written in the mores and idioms deriving from five distinct cultural eras, the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, the Persian Period and the Hellenistic and Roman Periods. While one must never absolutize, as do literalists and fundamentalists, the primary religious language of these texts bears whatever messages the believing communities can hear from them—the Word of God through the strange words of these texts.

Our canonical texts are multi-valent, else they could not have spoken to so many communities in so many locales over so long a history. Even so there are clear constraints within the texts themselves. While hermeneutics are often brought to texts to get them to say what they do not say, we can only make that point because there is still something one can call the plain reading of a text. While we may well be in a “post-critical era,” we can not ignore the tremendous gains made since the 17th century in critical study of the Bible. Enlightened study of the Bible can be viewed as a gift of God in due season if its limitations are properly observed and its methods constantly improved. And one of the main reasons it should be so viewed is that it alone can help us hear responsibly the strange voices of our ancestors in the faith. And while their strange idioms and mores must not be absolutized, they should not be ignored.

When prophecy ceased in Early Judaism it was not only Wisdom which took its place, it was also midrash. When there was no longer the prophetic or even priestly oracle to turn to for guidance, there was a body of literature that came itself to be called the Torah, the old term used for such an oracle. Jews

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and then later Christians turned to this growing body of literature to seek guidance in new situations. The corpus had eventually to be limited, and hermeneutic rules or modes had to be devised to control the exercise, precisely so as not to abuse the text and make it say whatever one wanted it to say.

Exegeting the context in which one dares to re-present these texts is every bit as important as exegeting the texts themselves, all the while being faithful to the earliest of an early meaning. The reader or hearer must always be prepared to be surprised by grace, to be open to hearing a challenge in the text even to his or her most precious premises. Proof-texting is common, that is, seeking support in Scripture for what one already thought or was going to do anyway. But proof-texting is basically abuse of Scripture. Seeking its strangeness and listening carefully for its surprises, both by good critical exegesis and judicious use of canonical hermeneutics, not only will help avoid such abuse of Scripture but will more importantly place the reader in a position to tap its blessings and its power.

Christ is and always should be a stranger in our midst; for it is God who revealed and reveals Christ, not our Christ who revealed God. Christians need ever to be reminded that Christ was not and is a not a Christian. God is not or was not a Christian—or a Jew. And so should Scripture retain its inherent strangeness, even when we Christians and Jews seek its blessing.

I should like to take a difficult problem in the Bible to illustrate its strangeness and an aspect of its potentially prophetic voice, the so-called hardening

of the heart of Pharaoh. A re-reading of Exodus 4 through 14 with careful attention to the expressions concerning Pharaoh's point of view about Moses' demands for his people yields the following basic observations:

The hardening theme occurs 17 times in Exodus. Eight of them specifically state that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. God's expressed involvement in Pharaoh's need to be responsible to his office and the Egyptian economy simply demands to be dealt with seriously.

We find it difficult to say that God encouraged Pharaoh in his point of view; we find it difficult still to think of “our” God getting God's hands dirty in Pharaoh's point of view. The best of us still tend to tribalize God; we still find it difficult to monotheize and affirm what the Bible affirms over and over again. Pharaoh, like modern Americans or any others who hold power, found it extremely difficult to be responsible to his office *and* also execute real justice. Exodus says God could work with that human situation, with that human sin or corruption of consciousness to weave God's story of salvation, the Torah.

Let us just suppose that Exodus was written in Sunday School. Suppose God has softened Pharaoh's heart. The community organizer, Moses, stages his demonstrations, Pharaoh is impressed, as in Exodus, but this time he hears the demands of the oppressed, senses the justice of them, invites Moses in for a cup of shay (tea), and asks him to wait while he dictates an emancipation proclamation. He might even send out a police escort to the border for safe journey. He says to Moses, in effect, just to go ahead and pull the rug out from under my economy and have your freedom.

Manifestly there would have been no Exodus and hence no Torah. There might possibly be a stele of stones out near Goshen or Pithom somewhere set up in gratitude for Pharaoh's emancipation proclamation for some modern archaeologist to discover, but there would be no Passover, no eating of the lamb by midnight, no departing in haste, in fact none of the traditions associated with God's liberating act. There would be no Torah and probably no Gospel. Thank God it was not written in Sunday School. Torah is God's emancipation proclamation, not Pharaoh's; and just as it is God's and not Pharaoh's, so Torah belongs to all God's creatures, just as does the full Torah-Christ story.

The key, of course, is to theologize first while reading the Bible, and then thereafter moralize. Above all, it means we have to monotheize in doing so. But we moralize first and are afraid of what the people out there would think if we said that God was at work even in the role that Pharaoh played in the liberation event. But the Bible says it over and over again. And then when the heavenly council begins to play more and more a role, and one of its members, the Satan, effects the monotheizing role God does in such passages as these in Exodus, some pastors allow their people to think that Satan is a rival god; and that is sheer polytheism.

But wouldn't you think that Europeans and Americans especially would appreciate Pharaoh's point of view, which essentially was, "Hold on, Moses, I'm impressed, but you're moving too fast. I can't let you ruin the economy like this; it would hurt the Hebrew slaves worse than us."

I think that those who command any power whatever must in some circumstances be able to identify with Pharaoh. It must be conceded that this Bible with all its strangeness is a book of realism, and not the kind of fairy tale we would make it because we first decide by praxis what ought to be done and what Pharaoh ought to do.

The Bible, if read honestly and on its own terms with a monotheizing hermeneutic, could provide the prophetic challenge that might permit humanity to move from self-serving ideas of responsibility only to in-group visions, to the kinds of humility that will unstop our ears, circumcise our hearts (Jer. 4:4; Deut. 10:16, 30:6) and open our eyes to share the hopes and fears of others, even so-called "enemies," and to see that God and humanity are, by God's grace, indeed one, and that Reality has the Integrity (Oneness of God) which by faith we are called to believe.

Jesus's command to love the enemy is a direct outgrowth of and theological sequel to the affirmations of monotheism in the First Testament. The Book of Deuteronomy affirms that God is the God of death as well as of life (Deut. 32:39). The old Canaanite god of death, Mot, continues to exist only in the doubts of those who do not monotheize. Isaiah stressed that God is the God of darkness as well as of light (Isa. 45:7), and the prophet Amos challenged those who would doubt it to observe simply that God turns light to darkness each

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dusk and darkness to light each dawn (Amos 5:8)—as reminders in case we doubt the point. God is creator as well as redeemer, and is neither without the other.

If we can hang in there and continue to monotheize, we might be able to re-read those passages in the Second Testament which indicate God's involvement in Jesus's death. Peter in his sermon at Pentecost, according to Luke, states that Jesus's death came about according to a "designated counsel and foreknowledge" of God. If the life and death of each of us belong to God, how much the more so with the Christ, upon whom God apparently made a very special claim.

But since the human mind is endemically polytheistic we have as much difficulty thinking that God got God's hands dirty making use of lawless men, again according to Peter's sermon (Acts 2:23), as God had gotten God's hands dirty in Pharaoh's point of view. And when we read what Luke earlier says about how the Satan entered into Judas Iscariot (Luke 22:3) we polytheize immediately and make the Satan an independent deity rival to the true God thwarting the work of *our good god* who had been doing marvelous things through *our Christ* up to that point. But if we refuse to stumble over the cultural idioms used either in the Iron Age Exodus account or in the Hellenistic period Gospel account, but learn to monotheize in and through all the cultural mores and givens of the Bible, we too can claim the power that Christ bequeathed the disciples to deny any demon whatever, any power whatever, but rather learn "to tread upon serpents and scorpions

and every enemy power so that nothing can hurt" (Luke 10:19). Again, if we can celebrate the Bible's continual insistence that all such gods have power only in our doubts that there is but One God, that is, Integrity of Reality. Whatever power "they" have is in our doubts and lack of faith in the Integrity of Reality, to whom belongs every serpent and every scorpion, and indeed every "enemy."

Now, surely that is going too far. How can we say that even every enemy belongs to God? Yes, in every situation where there are protagonists and antagonists, while God has a divine bias for the powerless and dispossessed, God identifies with neither side of our human conflicts but loves both. Pharaoh's heart, from the slaves' point of view, was hard. But from Pharaoh's point of view Moses was a murderer and a fugitive from justice, indeed a very uppity community organizer who had the gall to put on, not just one or two, but 10 demonstrations. The Book of Exodus says God worked with both points of view in a very common late Bronze-Age slave-rebellion situation to weave God's Torah, God's emancipation proclamation. Every enemy belongs to God, and since we Americans are apparently the enemy of so many peoples on the planet, we should especially take courage from the affirmation.

To monotheize in reading the Gospel account is to learn to celebrate God's revealing God's Christ, not to celebrate *our Christ* revealing God. To monotheize is to celebrate God's full involvement in our rejection of God's Christ. God sent us God's most precious gift and we crucified him, not those old Jews and Romans back there, but we human beings on this pitiful planet crucified him. To monotheize is to celebrate the Bible as paradigm of love and not stumble over the question of why God chose one particular slave rebellion in the late Bronze Age, or chose one particular Jew in the Hellenistic-Roman period in both of whom God chose to be vulnerable to the human condition. A paradigm is learned in our pitifully limited little human brains by recitation of particulars, and so we learn to monotheize, that is, pursue the Integrity of Reality by reciting canonical accounts of particulars. Is it not time to learn not to stumble over the particulars even though the particulars are an intimate part of the paradigm?

Monotheizing

If clergy and laity were to discipline their minds to theologize rather than moralize on first reading biblical texts, and to practice a monotheizing hermeneutic in doing so, the results could be revolutionary for church, synagogue and society. This means for Christians taking the First and Third Persons, God and Spirit, of the Trinity as seriously as the Second, Christ. To read the Bible on its own terms is to tap a source of power almost beyond reckoning. Ten possible results might be the following:

1. It can introduce a truly theocentric perspective in both church and synagogue that God's work of creation in the world and of redemption in Israel and in Christ can be seen as continuing today.

2. It can provide a theological base for learning from current international wisdom just as the biblical authors and thinkers did in their day.

3. It can release Christians to honor Christ and worship him as the Second Person of the Trinity, truly as the Son of God, rather than the idol we grasp by our limited and tribalistic ideas of the incarnation.

4. It can seriously challenge Christianity's continuing anti-Semitism of all sorts and permit us in reading the New Testament to identify with our just counterparts, the good religious folk who were deeply offended by Christ, and permit us thereby to see our own daily rejections of God's Christ, in favor of the idol we have made of him.

5. It can underscore the need to pursue social ethics and hence put New Testament personal ethics in a larger canonical perspective.

6. It can help us understand all people in the Bible as humans, God's creatures, hence available for us as mirrors of our own human foibles; it can permit us to see both the splendor and the squalor of the human condition before taking sides on issues, and perhaps, having done so, it could enable us to love not only the neighbor but even the enemy, realistically of course, as Christ commanded.

7. It may engender a reading of the whole Bible by the hermeneutic of the freedom of the God of grace so that we could learn how free God's grace really is, even for those we know do not deserve it (like a sheep that gets itself lost, a spoiled younger brother, or those who work only one hour in the cool of the day

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yet receive the same compensation as the faithful).

8. It can challenge narrow, in-group, denominational readings of the Bible, especially the New Testament.

9. It can help Christians learn that God revealed God's Christ as the climax of God's Torah-Christ Gospel for the world and discourage the tendency to think that our Christ revealed God.

10. It can, finally, release Christians to evangelize canonically and share the Torah-Christ Gospel story, not because we think Christ in the incarnation gave us an exclusive hold on God or out of fear that others, especially Jews are lost—but because out of sheer joy in the Holy Spirit (Luke 10:17) we cannot but share the vision of the Integrity of Reality which both the Jewish and Christian canons afford.

Do we dare to practice canonical monotheism and become witnesses to the continuing care of the one true, loving God of creative judgment and redeeming grace, who, as the prophets and Jesus taught us, can turn every fear into hope? Let us learn once again how to fear God, and not the bomb, and not pollution, and not another political system, but rather take all our late 20th-century fears, wrap them up and surrender them to that one God who feared neither Pharaoh's chariots, Babylon's prisons, Herod's sword, nor Roman power. Surrendering all our false fears and genuinely learning to fear the One God of all creation is genuine redemption, for God's true love alone can transform that fear of God into love of all God's children and peoples everywhere. American Protestants have a song which most Christians of the world have come to love. Its title is "Amazing Grace."

The second verse expresses in part the point I want to make, "'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved . . ." The fears that grace relieves are false fears. The fear that grace teaches is of God and God alone: And that is indeed the beginning of Wisdom.

Humility and Responsibility

My former beloved colleague, Cyril Richardson, once said in the midst of all the turmoil of the late '60s that the only hope he could see for humanity was a mutation of the genes. My response was that I couldn't wait that long.

I want to share a hope I have, and it comes out of reading these texts, in Hebrew and Greek, over and over again for almost 40 years. One of our so-called Christmas carols claims that "the hopes and fears of all the years were met" in a Bethlehem cradle. We started by observing that folk the world over are scared, hounded by the multiple fears of the atomic bomb, disease, and especially by the fear that the basic societal institutions of the various world cultures may crumble in the face of disaster.

But we must also note that alongside those fears are signs of hope: advances in science that may make the bomb a genuine deterrent against any real global conflict; the information revolution; global travel on the part of many; *glasnost*, the opening up of traditionally xenophobic societies such as the Soviet and Chinese; the internationalization of the world's finances in almost uncontrollable ways; the integration of our own country from its traditional views of self-serving isolation and sanctuary into its being part of the real world; advances in computer sciences, laser technology, superconductivity; and many more that make this planet a genuinely global village. Can we believe that the Integrity of Reality—God—can weave both hopes and fears into God's truth? Can we believe that God's Integrity of Reality can redeem our human ambiguity of reality?

Heretofore each in-group on the planet has expressed responsibility to its myth or gospel or Torah or vision as its primary task. At times, some in-groups have felt called to exercise the humility of granting humanity and credibility to other groups, meaning listening to their stories and even perhaps learning from them. In nearly all cases the humility never got very far out of the eventual fear of loss of a sense of responsibility to

the in-group vision. This, too, is but part of the sinful human condition, and very understandable. The various forms of fundamentalism in the world today are expressions of that fear.

What if we learned to put humility first and responsibility to our visions second? In other words, when do we become irresponsible to our own identities in listening to others' hopes and fears? Some universalists might want to ask instead why not give up responsibility to group visions and only emphasize commonality. That in my opinion would be total irresponsibility, for if we do not remain loyal to the several traditions we have been granted there would be no reason to listen to each other and nothing to learn from each other. My identity is at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ, with faith in the Resurrection, God's new creation; for in God's presence, in God's self-willed vulnerability in that cross I find my total being, both totally judged and fully redeemed.

Is it not time to learn from others of

Is it not time to learn from others of God's children, but remain faithful and responsible to our differing identity-giving traditions so that we too have something to say?

God's children, but remain faithful and responsible to our differing identity-giving traditions so that we too have something to say? I am not talking about simple co-existence on this planet, I am talking about a double conviction: the conviction that God or Reality has in-

deed impacted our ancestors in the faith with God's truth, a truth we have a real obligation to maintain and to share; but also the conviction that God has also impacted others with God's truth, about which we should be eager to learn.

A bare start might be made by Christians confessing, as Thomas Merton saw, that we all have tended to tribalize the concept of the Incarnation and have tended to make an idol of Christ. A bare start might be made by Jews confessing that Jews have tended to tribalize the Abraham-Sarah promises as belonging to them alone and have tended to make an idol of the concept of Zion. Each in-group of us, if we are to enter the 21st century with any real hope, must find our own ways of expressing the humility that comes from belief that all of us on this planet have One God, that there is indeed Integrity, Oneness, ontological and ethical, to Reality, and then within that larger framework express responsibility to our differing and most precious visions of that Reality.

KSR Slates '89 Lecturer

Lyle E. Schaller, a Parish Consultant at Yorkfellow Institute in Richmond, Ind., will deliver the 1989 KSR Lecture.

Schaller will deliver his address at the annual banquet March 8 and 9; details are forthcoming.

Board of Trustees Announced

The Board of Trustees held elections of officers at its annual meeting April 12. New officers and their titles are:

Allen Wiechert
Dollie Bittenbender
Stitt Robinson
Howard Hurwitz

President
Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer

Fall Conferences Available

The Kansas School of Religion will sponsor four fall conferences across the state that explore "The Role of Faith in Crisis."

Nurses, social workers and clergy can earn seven continuing education credit hours for their attendance to the daylong conference. The conference locations and dates are:

Hutchinson Hutchinson Hospital Auditorium	Sept. 9
Salina Marymount College	Sept. 30
Topeka Washburn University	Oct. 1
Parsons Labette Community College	Oct. 14

The cost is \$25 and includes lunch. Contact the KSR, 1300 Oread Ave., Lawrence, Kan. 66045 to register.

Essay Winners Recognized

'Religion and the Economy' is '89 topic

The KSR awarded scholarships to three Kansas high school students for their participation in the 1988 essay contest.

Scott Truhlar of Ellsworth, Kan., won first place for his essay, "The Marriage of Technology and Religion is Vital." The second-place winner was Ricardo A. Olea of Lawrence, Kan., who addressed "The Religious Community and Space Defenses." Pamela Neifert of Rose Hill, Kan., won third place with her essay titled, "Are Religion and Technology Becoming Bosom Buddies?"

The first-, second- and third-place winners traveled to Lawrence in April, where they received \$300, \$200 and \$100 respectively at the KSR annual banquet.

The Board of Trustees met in April and decided the topic of the 1989 essay contest for high school students. In light of the volatile stock market and wavering economic indicators, the Board selected "Religion and the Economy" as the topic.

Participants may submit entries by Jan. 15* to their local clergy association. One winning essay from each county will then go to the KSR by Feb. 15*. Winners will be announced in March.

*Please note the change in due dates.



The first-, second- and third-place winners of the high school essay contest traveled to Lawrence to receive their awards. From left to right, Scott Truhlar, first, Pamela Neifert, third, and Ricardo A. Olea, second.

Suggestions for Planning Your Estate

Several ways to extend your influence through religion are available in the making of bequests to the Kansas School of Religion in your will.

Types of Bequests

General Bequest This is a method whereby you bequeath a stated amount or a percentage of your estate to the KSR without any conditions attached.

Designated Bequest By this method you designate a particular program or several programs to receive your gift. Your will assures eventual continuing support for the cause you select, such as faculty development, library, conferences, visiting lecturers or the building.

Bequests Providing Life Income This plan provides a sum of money that will be invested and then will pay the income from such investment to you or your stated beneficiary for life. Using income tax benefits, it pays income to the beneficiary during lifetime and supports the work thereafter.

Testamentary Trust This is an arrangement whereby property is placed under the management of a trustee, usually a bank or a trust company. It does not become operative and binding until your death. Eventually the entire trust amount goes to the KSR.

Designated Life Insurance An insurance policy is written with the KSR as the irrevocable recipient upon the death of the donor. The premiums paid during the donor's lifetime carry certain tax advantages.

Residuary Bequest This is a provision in your will leaving the remainder of your estate, or a portion thereof to causes through the Kansas School of Religion after all other bequests are fulfilled.

Contingent Bequest This bequeaths to the KSR any part of your estate other beneficiaries are unable to receive because of death or other reasons. In case none of your heirs survive you, the ultimate beneficiary, such as the KSR, will be able to receive your property.

Each way can further your mission far into the future.

Further Information on Gifts
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Lawrence, KS 66045
phone (913) 843-7257

Traverse Log

From time to time, a reader writes the School of Religion to ask the director, Dr. Lynn Taylor, to describe the meaning of a Traverse Log. These inquiries illustrate, once again, how tools of antiquity fall prey to progress.

As was his nature, Dr. Taylor lucidly explained that a Traverse Log was an implement of navigation carried aboard sailing vessels. The little board had a compass drawn on it, and cardinal lines extended in each direction far enough to accommodate eight holes. The helmsman put a peg in a hole to record the direction he had steered that half hour. Thus, the instrument allowed its user to know points of the past and plot the path of the future.

Like the ancient helmsman, Dr. Taylor could "navigate" your thoughts to discovery of new insights of the world. He wrote and published the Traverse Log as his vehicle to provide wisdom and direction.

I recall my first class period as a student of Dr. Taylor's in 1985. I was a sophomore at the time—old enough to follow a syllabus, but young enough to think that I could understand "The Life and Teachings of Jesus" in one semester.

The syllabus was simple. No quizzes, tests or final examinations. No mandatory attendance. Our classroom experience consisted of textbook readings, class discussions and completion of seven papers on the topic of our choice.

I was smugly confident.

The semester, however, was far from easy. For one thing, Dr. Taylor never interrupted when student discussions became heated. He seldom corrected loose biblical interpretation, and he never attempted to indoctrinate his students. Above all, he believed that everyone had a personal philosophy—from atheism to Zen.

One day, Dr. Taylor persuaded an outspoken campus evangelist to speak to our class. The evangelist bore his six-foot cross up Mount Oread to spew his fire and brimstone at wide-eyed students.

Dr. Taylor interrupted the zealous witness only once. He quietly slipped his hand into the air and reminded the frenzied preacher that his cross was dangerously hovering amid fluorescent lightbulbs.

That was it.

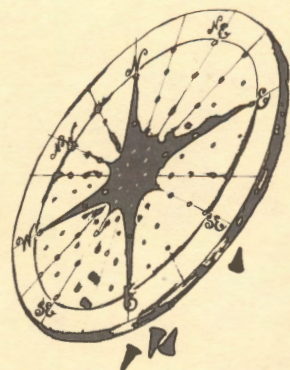
Many of the students, including myself, hoped Dr. Taylor would wield his mighty knowledge of the Bible and smite down the hateful evangelist. Instead, Dr. Taylor exercised his belief that one forges a personal

philosophy only after exposure to a wide range of beliefs—no matter how caustic.

Dr. Taylor was my most influential professor because he taught me nothing. Rather, like the ancient helmsman, he provided calculated direction amid an oft-tumultuous sea.

May peace be with him on his latest journey.

Beth Copeland



Lynn F. Taylor, executive director of the Kansas School of Religion and until 1985 professor of religious studies at Kansas University, died Friday at Lawrence Memorial Hospital. He was 68.

Taylor, a resident of Presbyterian Manor for the past two months, retired from the KU faculty in 1985 but retained his position as executive director of the privately financed school. He also was director of the National Council on Religion and Public Education.

For many years, the school was the academic entity that taught religious studies at the university. In 1977, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at KU formed the department of religious studies and took on many duties performed by the school.

Taylor served as dean of the school from 1970 to 1977. He had been assistant dean for one year before taking over as dean.

The school, located in Smith Hall, provides financing for religious studies conferences, faculty development, library materials and outreach programs in Kansas communities.

"He was a man with a long background of commitment to religion and higher education," said Robert Shelton, chairman of KU's department of religious studies. "He had a special interest in matters of religion and public education, which continue to be very serious issues in American society."

"He had a real interest and concern for individual students, an affection for many students. He had a good sense of humor and a real concern for bringing the resources of individuals and groups to bear on the academic study of religion," Shelton said.

Before coming to KU in 1969, Taylor was dean of the chapel and professor of philosophy and religion at Doane College in Crete, Neb.

He also was vice president, academic dean and professor of English and Christian education at Tarkio College, Tarkio, Mo., and was an instructor in education at the University of Nebraska.

Mr. Taylor received bachelor's degrees from the College of Emporia and McCormick Seminary in addition to a master's degree and doctorate in education administration from Nebraska.

He was a U.S. Navy chaplain and served as pastor of Presbyterian churches at Tekamah, Neb., Pratt, Joliet, Ill., and Fremont, Neb.

He was born March 16, 1920, in Osborne.

Survivors include his wife, Rebecca, of the home at Presbyterian Manor; a son, L. Franklin Taylor, Olathe; two daughters, Martha Dever, Dillon, Colo., and Priscilla Fussman, Colorado Springs, Colo.; a sister, Julia Wisniski, Omaha, Neb.; and seven grandchildren.

Services will be held on Tuesday, June 28 at 10:00 a.m. at the First Presbyterian Church at 2415 Clinton Parkway in Lawrence, Kansas.

The family suggests memorials be made to the Kansas School of Religion, The Good Samaritan Fund at the Lawrence Presbyterian Manor (1429 Kasold Drive, Lawrence, KS) or the Enzyme Research Foundation, in care of The Warren-McElwain Mortuary.

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