

INSIGHT

By REV. JOHN P. BRADLEY, President

By way of an amusing and clever parable, Rolfe Neill, Publisher of *The Charlotte Observer*, recently showed in his column how governments and their bureaucrats strive to persuade people that, despite the common sense adage to the contrary, there is after all such a thing as a free lunch. Now most of us, I am sure, Mr. Neill included, are not, against free lunches, if they really are free with no strings attached. And surely here at Belmont Abbey College we have plenty of real live evidence that there are still people around whose Christianity provides the incentive to work for the good of others without being paid to do so—recently it was calculated that each Benedictine who works in the College contributes an average of some \$7,000 every year to the education of our students. What Mr. Neill, I assume, and many others of us, resent is the attempt to persuade us by the abstruse trickery of some practitioners of the dismal science, economics, that this or that is free when in fact it is not. Interestingly, I read recently in an article by a Cambridge don who taught at King's College, Cambridge, when Lord Keynes was there, that Keynes made arrangements for a change in the status of a part of King's College's endowment, and the result was that the College suffered substantial economic loss. One would think that after the dismal experience Britain has suffered from the dabbling of academic economists in the running of their country everyone should by this time be well warned about the perils of such dabbling.

As I read Mr. Neill's piece, the thought occurred to me that we do indeed live in strange times, but I believe that most people, despite the dedication of politicians to the spending of money we don't have, still don't really appreciate anything they get for nothing, unless, of course, it is a personalized gift motivated by love, respect, etc. Indeed, I believe that this is one of two traits common to most people: the other trait is this: most people want to help others get the benefits they themselves got when they needed them.

With regard to the first contention, namely, that people don't really appreciate anything they get for nothing, I am sure many illustrations of this could be found. But one stands out in my mind perhaps because it was told me years ago by a dear friend and respected colleague, the late Howard "Humpy" Wheeler, after whom the College gymnasium is named. During World War II, Humpy was an officer in the Navy, and among his other duties he was responsible for the crew's recreational facilities while at sea. He told me that he was particularly proud one time of being able to obtain a well publicized recently issued movie for showing to the crew. He had posters printed announcing the showing of the movie and in large letters at the foot of the poster appeared the line: **ADMISSION FREE**. To Humpy's utter astonishment, very few showed up for the movie. After thinking this over, Humpy decided he would show the same movie again. He had new posters printed, but with two changes: the new date of the showing and, this time, at the foot of the poster appeared the line: **ADMISSION 25 cents**. "That did it," Humpy said. "This time there were no vacant seats."

Two stories may serve to illustrate the second contention, namely, that most people want to help others get the same benefits they themselves got when they needed them. The first story was told recently at the Alumni Weekend dinner here at the College by Mr. Ty Boyd, the speaker that evening. Ty told of a series of small huts dispersed a number of miles apart in the snow- and ice-bound Yukon. Each hut, he told us, has a stove and a supply of firewood. On the wall above the firewood there is a notice saying that there is no charge for the use of the hut, but that the user is asked to replenish the firewood supply for the benefit of others coming after him. Evidently this request is scrupulously honored.

A second illustration was provided by a lady who has spent many years on the Board of a Foundation which gives financial aid to assist needy and worthy students to obtain a college education. She told me that the Foundation decided a number of years ago to have the beneficiaries sign a form promising to reimburse the Foundation if they are ever able to do so, in order that others coming after them would get the same benefits they got. This did not imply any legal obligation, but simply underlined the ageless wisdom of the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The lady told me that the response to this over

the years has been excellent; so good, in fact, that other Foundations, impressed by the record, have written for information with a view to adopting a similar policy.

It should be no surprise that reflection on these matters led me to wonder why colleges and universities have not, as far as I know, paid much attention to the two human traits I have been discussing. Admittedly, I have wondered frequently about many things colleges and universities do or don't do. Nevertheless, since administrators in private colleges know well that throughout the nation students on average pay no more than 70 percent of the actual cost of their education, one would think that the students should be told this. Yet, as far as I know, they are not told this and in my experience students have very little knowledge, if any, about the difference between the price they pay and the actual cost of their college education. Similarly, the students in the public sector should be told that they pay a very small percentage of the actual cost of their education and that the difference is picked up by the taxpayer, and also, increasingly nowadays, through the public institution's vigorous pursuit of private gifts. If students, whether at private or public institutions of higher education, are not given this important information, they are deprived of the opportunity to exercise the human traits discussed above. In the Epistle to the Romans, there is a verse asking if people do not hear about Jesus Christ, how can they believe in Him? If students do not hear of the great benefits they receive from others, why should we expect that later on in their lives, if they are in a position to help others obtain the benefits they got, they will be eager to do so?

Consequently, I have asked the Business Office at Belmont Abbey College to make a recommendation on how best to inform students and-or their parents about this most important matter, a way that would 1) show the actual cost of the students' education; 2) show the much smaller figure they have to pay; 3) show in as suitable a manner as possible how the College provides or proposes to provide the difference between the price they pay and the actual cost so that the budget can be balanced. Apart from anything else, this would educate the students on an important fact of life, viz., how, in some detail, they are provided with an education and how much actual help from others they have received—an important part, one would think, of the students' education for life. At the same time it would give the students an appreciation for the generous donors who help to make their education possible and might prompt some of them to write a thank-you letter to certain contributors, something I believe contributors would treasure much more highly than the most eloquently worded letter of gratitude from a college president.

Similarly, it seems to me that public universities and colleges should provide their students with this kind of information, particularly since, generally speaking, they pay a much smaller percentage of the actual cost than do students in the private sector and have, therefore, more to be thankful for.

Finally, since the public colleges and universities are public, this kind of information should be given not only to the students, but should also be well publicized so that the public whose taxes pay for so much of the actual cost are informed in some detail about the use to which their tax dollars are being put. This kind of information might help them to understand why President Friday has had to request a one billion-dollar budget for public education during the next biennium. This kind of information might also cause them to ask themselves how much more than one billion dollars President Friday would need for his budget if the 38 private colleges and universities in North Carolina had to close their doors.

(Cont. From P. 4)

Lost Alumni

Snock, Bernard C., Rev.; Underwood, Jack R.

1958

Cornell 'D' Echert, Blaise; Mashourn, John D., Jr.; Ross, Michael; Salem, John M.; Wheeler, Royden J., Jr.

1959

Collins, David L.; Cybrynski, Robert C.; Fadel, Sam; Harrington, Stonewall J.; Hiter,

William W.; Kerr, William E.; Littrell, William L.; Maher, Brian P.; Neagle, Joe A.; Ros, T. Rory

1960

Bard, William R.; Carroll, Thurston, D.; Cusick, Patrick A.; Gruenther, Alfred M.; Hoyle, Leonard L.; Huggins, Grady F.; Long, Virginia B.;

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Ringler, Charles A.; Schraudt, George E., III; Smith, Andrew J., Sr.; Stewart, William A., Jr.; Tangredi, Abert J.

1961

Baumer, Thomas M.; Carroll, James M.; Hannan, John J.; Jenkins, Robert J.; Neffler, Carl T.; Leonard, John W., Jr.; McCorry, Peter G.; Pettit, Jerry E.; Shannon, Eugene H.; Summers, Robert J.

1962

Hand, Edward L.; Kale, Dan E.; Kincaid, Bonnie M.; Lytte, James R.; Murray, John V.; Schmitt, Robert A.; Segars, Otis L.; Sallitto, Richard C.; Stoen, Robert B.; Stowe, Richard P.; Sullivan, Shaun V.; Tuller, William E.

1963

Aguirre, J. Edward, Jr.; Cox, James L.; Fox, Melvyn M.; Gallagher, Patrick L.; Gullede, Emmett C.; Husemann, Brenda G.; Johnson, Genevieve H.; Jcnes, John R.; Korte, John B.; Kuhn, Joseph D.; Lanier, James R., Jr.; Larrazabal, Luis JG; Lawing, Arnold O., Jr.; Miller, Donald C.; O'Brien, Michael P.; Plageman, David D.; Ross, C. Eugene; Ryan, Rose Gregorg, Sister; Schrum, Jacob P.; Stanley, W. Dallas; Wilkins, James H.; Williams, Virginia W.

1964

Devany, William K.; Elmore, Eugene L.; Hawkins, J.W.; Knight, Francis W.; Lund, George Edward, III; Malinowski, Thaddeus A.; McGuinness, John J.; Reaney, William P.; Shardella, Rocco A.; Spotts, John C.; Taylor, Albert J., Jr.; Torma, Michael J.

1965

Carey, Ann Carol; Clapp, Donald C.; Daughtry, Russell J.; Daw, Charles W., III; Falck, William E.; John, R. Burke; Lange, Michael D.; Murray, Lawrence B.; Reese, William W., Jr.; Scott, Paul M.; Stevens, James E., Jr.; Tabet, John S.; Talbott, Donald E.

1966

Boags, Martin A., Bro.; Burrell, Ray G.; Canyes, Michael B.; Driscoll, Stephen P.; Edmonds, William H., Jr.; Herndon, Aubrey H., Jr.; Lalley, Michael J.; Lapham, Harry F., Jr.; Maher, Joseph V.; McCluskey, Jerome P.; Prather, James K.; Ranken, Paul F.; Sailliez, Charles S.; Shaffer, Robert J.; Spates, Thomas H., Jr.;

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