

## Role of the Junior College

(Editor's Note: Excerpts for a speech given by Dr. Robert Elliott to Lions Club in Shelby, N. C.)

Most Americans now agree that our primary problem is adapting ourselves to our new role as the potential leaders of two-thirds of mankind. Some people think we are handicapped for this job by our very nature. I think that of all the earth's peoples we may be fitted for such a role. Americans have never been satisfied to be narrowly Americans. They have always insisted on getting an education in the fullest sense of the word, and this is precisely what effective world leadership requires.

To begin with we, as Americans, have a three story heritage:

1. We belong to a democratic, powerful, and prosperous new country.
2. We participate by right in all Western civilization.
3. As human beings we can claim as ours everything men and women have been or done since Adam.

Yet, with such a heritage we are in trouble. The free world looks to us for leadership, and our leadership promises much to the free world. We are the world's greatest salesmen, yet we cannot talk about our greatest product, our democracy. Why should this be so? Everybody tells us about ourselves. We are the best informed generation that ever lived, with the most primitive ideas of what to do with our information. We know how to blow up the world, but we don't know how to govern it.

How may we know ourselves so that we may know our weakness as well as our strength; so that we may understand the relationship between our cultural responsibilities and the political and military objectives to which we are committed; so that we may proclaim the virtues of American life in the universal language of humanity? The question leads straight to the liberal arts Christian college of today.

In the summer of 1630 nine hundred men and women left their homeland in England to sail for a new home in America. Within a year they had founded Boston and six or seven towns nearby. These people were not forced out of their native land by economic necessity or by political pressure. They simply were not satisfied with the religious and cultural climate of England and chose to create one in which they could be satisfied.

Six years later, in 1636, these New England Puritans "dreading to leave an illiterate Minister to the churches when our present Ministers shall lie in the Dust" established Harvard College. They intended to train ministers, but also they wished to advance learning. President Increase Mather addressed his students thus: "You who are wont to philosophize in a liberal spirit are pledged to the words of no particular master, yet I would have you hold fast to that one truly golden saying of Aristotle: . . . find a friend in Truth."

These people saw a need to teach the virtues of the life they conceived to be the universal need of mankind. To achieve this aim they established a college based on Christian teachings.

What are we doing today to discharge the responsibility that devolves upon ourselves? For a great number of years now science and technology have been the heroes of higher education. Technical invention and business skill have been developed to a higher degree. But in the progress we have lost sight of a fundamental fact: we have failed to learn how to live. We have ignored the common aims of society: Christianity, democracy, and a liberal education.

We need to be reminded today that spiritual toughness and resiliency are just as important, if not more important, than mechanical achievement. Illiteracy in science and technology is much less dangerous for a citizen of democracy than illiteracy in history or politics or morality. We can drive an automobile across a bridge without knowing much about the mechanical principles of bridge construction. But in our role as citizens we must have a substantial degree of personal expertise. There is an indispensable minimum of knowledge that cannot be delegated; to do so is the first step toward the abandonment of democracy itself.

Where can this spiritual toughness be acquired? In the small Christian college, the direct heir of the first college established in the wilderness of Massachusetts over three hundred years ago. Here Americans can insist upon and get an education and an outlook in the full Occidental and human

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## FOUNDER'S DAY

Dr. V. Ward Barr, pastor, First Baptist Church, Gastonia, N. C., delivered the address for the seventh annual observance of Founder's Day at Gardner-Webb College October 30, 1933. Dr. Barr commended the school for the progress made since 1935, when it was organized as a high school.

Speaking from the stage in the auditorium of the E. B. Hamrick Memorial Building, graced with campus foliage, Dr. Barr asserted, "that the accomplishments expanding from the Herculean task have come only with hard work." He used this opportunity to applaud Dr. P. L. Elliott, president of the school, for the outstanding leadership he has exhibited in his ten years as head of the institution.

Dr. Barr spoke of the high morals that belong to the Christian school. He praised faculty and students for their efforts in maintaining a campus for Christ. An institution of upholding the ideals of Christianity will be washed into the "vortex of irretrievable ruin," was the opinion of Dr. Barr.

As he continued, he said that any organization will not extend beyond the purpose for which it is dedicated. Dr. Barr stated that a church, as well as a school, must be constantly stimulated in Christ to attain high standards.

Dr. Barr took ample time to express his appreciation to the personalities attending him behind the rostrum. They were: The Rev. John Farrar, Dr. Zeno Wall, The Rev. John Suttle, President P. L. Elliott, The Rev. Worth Long and Mr. Stephen Morrisett. All of the men are either members of the Board of Trustees of Gardner-Webb College or faculty members.

In conclusion, Dr. Barr reminded his audience of being witnesses for Christ, and to continue to strive for a better Gardner-Webb College.

kense of these words. Here we, as Americans, can pick up those neglected threads of our historical tradition, and create young Americans aware not only of their own country's development but of its broader place in the history of the West and of Man. We shall, in the future, I believe, select our leaders with less emphasis on technical skill and more on ability to understand the broad concepts of Americanism; and to understand them is to sell America.

The true function of a small Christian college is to stimulate to excellence, to encourage in the Age of the Common Man the uncommon man. And while concentrating on its main job, the Christian college does have a secondary but by no means minor responsibility to raise the cultural level of the society which feeds it. No college can be culturally or morally healthy in a culturally or morally sick society. To teach free men to think as free men there must be free interchange between the college and society, because a college succeeds in its aims only when it is an accepted part of society, respected and supported in every sense by society.