

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is the text of the Brief submitted to the UPC by the Chancery Office on behalf of the Catholics of P.E.I.

Dear Sirs:

We the Catholics of Prince Edward Island make this submission to you in response to your request for briefs in connection with the establishment of a new Island University.

Our interest and involvement in higher education in this province is a tradition dating from the first half of the 19th Century and has found expression in St. Dunstan's University.

Education according to this tradition can be viewed as the formation of the individual in the pursuit and acquisition of truth. This means that the person is formed to respect, pursue, and acquire truth on all levels and to integrate this knowledge into an ordered whole. The student acquires capability to appreciate and understand the physical sciences, the social sciences, the arts and the human and philosophical sciences. We believe in the pursuit of truth on these levels and we hold that the proper intellectual development of man implies his acquiring a respect for these arts and sciences and the proper methodology of each. To this point we are one with most educators.

But the pursuit and acquisition of truth to this point is incomplete. It does not include one level of reality, one area of which man ever desires knowledge. This is the area of revelation—the knowledge of God and of man's relations to God. And the Christian, believing as he does that God has contributed to the body of truth by revealing of Himself and His will for man, considers that any search for truth must include the study of such divine things. Consequently, for the Christian, any education which ignores this is necessarily incomplete and partial. We emphasize, therefore, that any university curriculum must take into account the theological dimension of reality and must include the disciplined study of religious truth.

It should be observed that this theory of education in no way depreciates the other arts and sciences. On the contrary, it fully appreciates and respects these for their intrinsic worth and for their value in human formation. It is while maintaining the highest regard for these disciplines that we submit unreservedly that education must include the science of theology.

What has been said to this point in no way implies that Christian education is simply secular humanistic education plus the study of theology. It involves these disciplines but it means much more. It means the integration of theological truth with other disciplines into an ordered whole. This arises from the fact that Christianity encompasses a unique view of reality, one which seeks recognition and interpretation in other disciplines, notably the philosophical and human sciences. There is also a Christian view of history, one which interprets the story of human existence in the light of Divine involvement in the world of men. In the fields of literature and the arts, the Christian dimension has been expressed in the past, and it must find expression and recognition in the academic world of the future. This is to stress therefore both the necessity and the validity in any academic program of an integrated program of studies that would reflect Christian truth and the implications of this truth in human existence.

Thus there is more to education than its intellectual content; indeed, education is more than the sum total of a member of disciplines. The educable individual is a mind, but he is also a person. As a person he is seeking an ordered view of reality and an integrated value system, one which will supplement, rationalize and synthesize the various human, social, and religious values communicated previously by the family, the community, the church, and early formal education. This is no less true for the Christian student whose unique values, communicated to him by his faith, demand an even more stringent integration. The person must be able to look to the University not only for ordered knowledge but for integration of personality as well. The university is not only to be a place where knowledge is openly and freely sought, but also one where truth on all levels is to be found.

And if the university is to contribute to that personality development and fulfillment for which every man must aspire, it must provide the opportunities for each person to find the rational

and scientific foundations of his personal beliefs and values.

These observations contain, in brief, a statement of our convictions about the aims and principal features of Christian higher education. We believe that our youth have the right to seek such an education; this belief has motivated us to erect and maintain St. Dunstan's University. Indeed, this same belief prompts us to be concerned about the structure of the new university.

One solution to this problem could be uniformity — but this approach is rejected in our society as both unjust and unworkable. The other is pluralism — an approach which respects and accepts diversity within a unity based on the existing consensus. Pluralism is the Canadian approach, one worked out by experience and now being given increased acceptance and recognition. Many problems of religious, ethnic, economic, and legal nature find their solution by the establishment of pluralist institutions. Indeed, a pluralist approach to education is predominant and is the only one that truly guarantees fairness and equity to all citizens and is the best preservative of that necessary and desirable human freedom which must permeate any educational system.

There is no need at this point of our elaborating the various changes which are current in the field of higher education. All such changes will have important consequences for Catholic participation in the whole field of higher education today and in the future. We judge that the most important of these consequences are the following:

- 1) St. Dunstan's University as a separate or autonomous Catholic college or university, in the light of financial arrangements foretold in Premier Campbell's "Policy Statement of Post-Secondary Education," cannot continue to exist.
- 2) The Catholic contribution to higher education on P.E.I. will be in the form of some sort of cooperation within the public, undenominational university about to be established.

Furthermore, while it is true that the tradition expressed in St. Dunstan's University flows in a stream that is Catholic in expression, it is now our sincere hope that we and our Protestant brothers will unite in a spirit of cooperation in the new university and thereby provide in a fuller and richer way the Christian presence in higher education.

And so we make this submission to you aware of our responsibility to remain faithful to two main principles: a) the terms of reference of the new university as laid down by the government, namely, that it must be 1) a new university, 2) unitary in character, and 3) undenominational; and b) our responsibility of remaining faithful to our tradition, the essentials of which we have received from our pioneer forefathers. We insist that this submission contains a minimum of what Catholics could accept without betraying their inheritance.

Accordingly, we now propose the necessary conditions for the undisturbed continuance of this stream of tradition in the new university; at the same time they are for us conditions for a whole new adventure of living, working, sharing, and exploring in education with others of differing Christian or other religious or non religious backgrounds.

- I. That the new university be Christian and open to all.

When our government speaks of a university to serve and fulfill the needs of all the people of Prince Edward Island, it knows that the population is almost totally Christian. "Undenominational" then should mean that it would be a Christian university, although not identified with any particular Christian denomination. The Christian presence would characterize it. At the same time an other religious system or approach to life would or should never be discriminated against.

- II. That an interdisciplinary division of studies—or a special division of the arts course—be established.

This proposal, in harmony with the philosophy of education outlined above, is one in effect

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in other universities where amalgamation formulae are being worked out. One example is Carleton University and St. Patrick's College in Ottawa.

- III. That there be a department of religious studies.

While the tendency is to set up departments of religious studies on a nondenominational basis, state universities and even universities of religious affiliation have discovered that after a period of time the denominational study of theology becomes necessary. We, therefore, call your attention to this phenomenon, and request that this be provided for from the outset.

- IV. That the new university be an open university.

No fully accredited course is to be eliminated, and no fully competent and qualified person is to be excluded.

- V. That there be a center of Pastoral Care.

We maintain that this is necessary for both the university and the college of applied arts and technology.

- VI. That the charter of St. Dunstan's University be not rescinded.

This Act must not lapse but is to be held in abeyance. This is good legal practice, indeed the common custom in such new developments involving long established institutions.

Gentlemen, this argument and these recommendations represent the present thinking of the Catholics of Prince Edward Island. May these suggestions and proposals be of benefit to you in your work of establishing a new university on Prince Edward Island, one which will be a bearer of the excellent traditions of the past and the harbinger of a bright educational future for all the citizens of Prince Edward Island.