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Fuller Theological Seminary

John Doty

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October 11, 1973

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              Dr. Harrison
Printing      Steve Brooks

Being editorial in nature, the Opinion represents no official position...
ABOUT THE OPINION

Does something bother you? Are you hung-up with seminary, our society or maybe someone else's "Christian" value system? Do you find you have a suggestion that may improve life, a plea that may quicken consciences, or simply a joy you want to express?

The Opinion is precisely the place to air your thoughts. Not only will an article receive wide circulation, giving ample feedback on your ideas, but the very act of writing may help you think through an idea that is completely new to you. We all grow, and growth in Christ is often fostered by sharing.

You may have been an engineer in college and feel that you can't write; perhaps you are a poet and feel "this kind of paper" isn't "writing" at all. Despair not! Brethren, the Lord loves a cheerful giver, and so does the editor.

"...whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise think about these things."

Paul, to the church at Philippi

Write (constructively), as well.... double-spaced, type written copy

c/o John Doty

FORMAT

This year The Opinion will take a slightly different turn. Each issue will have some central feature article in addition to the forensics of the past. The first issue has, in part, been geared to new students to acquaint them with some of Fuller's beyond-the-classroom concerns. Upcoming this quarter will be coverage of the trustee's discussion of a student representative on previously inviolate committees - just what is the students place? Another issue will feature an interview with Mel White on the making of his new film "In the Presence of Mine Enemies," and some reviews. Dialogue with other seminaries and interviews with local pastors are only two of the possible features for issues after Christmas.

THE EDITOR
An appointed position, member of student council.

Doty— a Platonist fond of the expression "The opinions herein expressed are not necessarily those of the Editor, or anyone else, but reflect a "higher truth"...to purposefully promote communication, cogitation, meditation, frustration, and jubilation, by dealing with only the most current mental machinations of the Fuller community."

DO YOU ATTEND FULLER FROM OUT OF STATE? CONSIDER THE SCHOOL OF WORLD MISSIONS

Republic of South Africa, Burundi, Liberia, Zambia, Zaire, Republic of Cameroon Ruanda, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Tanzania, Etheopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Philippines New Guinea, New Zealand, Tonga, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, India, Bangladesh Pakistan, Thailand, Malaysia, Korea, Ecuador, Venezuela, Brazil, Honduras Dominican Republic, Mexico, Guatemala, Argentina, Peru, Bolivia, Finland, Greenland, United Kingdom, Alaska.
INTERVIEW: With Dr. Harrison, about "Going to Seminary"

Well respected as a teacher, and always eagerly anticipated for his moving chapel presentations, Dr. Harrison has now retired from full-time teaching. Holding the longest residency with Fuller, he still holds perhaps one of the largest classes this quarter: Petrine Epistles, in Greek no less!

For this issue of The Opinion, it was thought that new students, walking boldly into the academic rigours of Christian service training, might like to hear a few of the thoughts, insights, and experiences of one having dedicated his entire working life to such a goal.

I guess I would begin by asking you what kind of family background you had...

Well, yea, as I mentioned to the new students in Orientation Week, I was born in Alaska where my parents were missionaries for seven years. They had a combination church of Indians, Eskimos, and whites, when the days of the gold rush were still on. They went up in 1898. So that's where I saw the light of day, but I can't remember too much about it. Then we went to Pittsburg, where father had a church for a few years, then to Seattle where he pastored the University Presbyterian church, from which Dr. Munger came, for ten years. During that time I went to the university there and then went on to school at Princeton, then out into the work.

Who would you say was probably the most important influence in your thinking about initially going into seminary?

Well, I suppose my father's influence was paramount in that respect. Of course growing up in a pastor's home, one encounters a great many visitors, visiting preachers, missionaries, bible teachers, and it's inevitable that they should have quite an effect on a boy's thoughts and ambitions, so I couldn't just pinpoint it to one person. But I think that my father had the major influence in guiding me into a life of full time service. While I had expected originally to be a missionary, it seemed that God's hand was leading in another direction, and when I tried to be a missionary, it was not really, I think, in the will of God. So it was a very brief tenure in the foreign field, and I came back to resume teaching. This is that which I feel God wants me to do. I've been at it for approximately forty years in theological education, with a few years in the pastorate also, but for the most part, in seminary work.

Especially for high school students thinking about going into college, who have already become Christians and are strong ones, perhaps even thinking about seminary while 16 or 17 years old, one of the hard decisions to make is whether to go to a Christian college, or a secular school. I was wondering if you had any thoughts on why you went to the University of Washington.
Well, I did have some thought about going to Wheaton, as I recollect, but it was a long way off, and finances were a problem, and the university was within walking distance so I could live at home; everything considered it seemed to be the best thing to do. But as far as the Bible college is concerned, I think that it's a wonderful thing for a person who's going out into, say, secular milieu, not going into Christian service, at least in a major role. The difficulty I see for a Christian college, in the case of one going into the ministry, is that the Christian college has a mixture of general subjects plus considerable interest in Bible, Christian doctrine, and so on. The result is that when one comes from that context to seminary he doesn't have quite enough of the humanities to provide a sufficient background because he's been a little shorted in college due to the necessity of taking a good many Bible courses. On the other hand having had the Bible courses, he has a tendency to feel that he doesn't need a good deal that the seminary has to offer. He can say to himself, "well, I've already had this." He may have had it, but presumably not on as high a level. So I feel that the secular college or university may offer the best starting point for one who is headed for seminary.

When I was a senior in college, I really began to feel like leading my life for the Lord, and dedicating myself that way. Yet I wasn't sure for a while whether I wanted to go to seminary or whether I wanted to stay in the world. What motivated you, or how did you feel you were "led", finally into going to seminary?

Well I can't answer that question too definitively, it just seemed the inevitable thing. I mean there wasn't any great problem. Now, as I look at my own sons I see that it's a different day for them. There are so many more options, and so much more uncertainty. I think they looked into four or five colleges, or universities, and had a very difficult time deciding, and did some shifting. Whereas in my case the course seemed to be pretty well laid out for me, and I didn't really have much misgiving, or uncertainty, I think that that day was a little different from today in that respect.

We were talking about your wanting to become a missionary but found out that it wasn't really God's will for you. Talking about the will of God is a difficult thing, it's always so hard to nail down any consoling definition. I'm sure that you understand that people have doubts almost every step they take as to what is God's will for them. Maybe you could just shed some light on that?

Yes, I'd be glad to talk to that because I think my experience might help others. In college I was a Student Volunteer, and the Student Volunteer movement was still fairly strong at that time, although it was showing signs of cracking up, which it did a few years later, due to a difference of viewpoint. The "rethinking missions" syndrome was in the air, and before long Inter-Varsity came along to fill in the gap that was left by the demise of the Student Volunteer movement. But at any rate, I belonged, and was looking forward to going to China, and took a year of Bible school, Bible
institute work after college, before going on to seminary. During that year I had my interest quickened somewhat in China, particularly a work in Hoo Nan, which the Los Angeles Bible Institute had as its China arm. They supported it, that is they were the home base for it. When I went on to seminary, the missionary who was in charge out there got in touch with me, and we pretty well agreed that that would be the place where I would serve. But the conditions in China, especially south China became very bad about that time, and when I finished seminary in 1927, it was thought inadvisable to try to go to China because of uncertain conditions. There was quite a bit of pillaging, burning; the revolutionary movement associated with Sun Yat Sen had come up from the south. Well, I took a church then in Canada for a year, then was called to teach in Dallas, and the missionary prospect seemed to begin to fade. But then Dr. Glover came along and spoke there at the school and he managed to stir me up, under God, I feel, to reconsider the whole matter. So I talked to him about it. The result was I got in touch with Dr. Keller, out in China, and plans were laid for going out and taking part in the work. So after marriage in June of 1930, my wife and I started for the field, and we were there for two years. But all this time there was an unrest of spirit and I couldn't shake it off. Finally I just gave in to it and responded to a call to come back and resume my teaching post. As I analyzed it afterward it seemed to me that my basic reason for going to the field was that I had been a Student Volunteer in college, that I'd committed myself to that kind of work. I believe I was just trying to measure up to that pledge, but that God, having given me some teaching experience in this country, was showing me through my unrest when I was out there, that I had taken a bypath even though it seemed to be a wonderful thing to do. So I came back to teach in this country, and I've been profoundly grateful to God that he has given me this opportunity. It was just complete restfulness then, in the will of God. So I think it's tremendously important for us, all of us, to be sure that we have that rest of spirit. I believe God gives that when we're in His will. If we're not He'll give that unrest; that'll be a pointer leading us to reconsider what we're doing, where we are, to try to get back on the beam.

Thank you, that's really helpful... was it after you began to teach at Dallas that you went on for further work?

Yes, I felt that after a few years in teaching that my training had not been sufficient quite for teaching work. I had taken a B.D. of course and a master's degree in Semetics and was teaching Old Testament, but I'd had more training in Greek actually than in Hebrew, or Semetics. So when I was asked to swing over to the New Testament I was glad to do that but felt that I needed more training. So I accepted a call to a church in the east, near Philadelphia on the condition that the church would allow me to devote some of my time to graduate work. It was only a twelve mile drive into the university, so over a period of four years I was able to complete the residence work, and majored in patristics. Then in the next six years I was occupied in teaching and writing the dissertation, so it was a ten year stint altogether. But I feel it was worthwhile, and I was a little better prepared then to go on and teach in the New Testament area.
Harrison — cont’d.

Maybe just a couple of more questions. There are a few students every year who would like to go on, to become professors, and some who would just like to feel they would be good enough to have that option without actually doing so. Did you find when you went through school that you were a phenomenal success in your classes?

(chuckle) Well, it’s a little to answer that John. In high school I had a good record, 28 A’s, as I recall, and 5 B’s, but when I got to college I missed Phi Beta Kappa, and I believe the basic reason was that I had too many outside activities going. I didn’t apply myself sufficiently. But in seminary I was in pretty good position. They graded there 1,2,3, and 4. I was tops of course, and 4 was a failure. Then they changed it after a while and got four passing categories, and one failure, of course. Well I managed to stay in the "1" group throughout the seminary course. And incidentally you might be interested in the other two men who were my classmates. They also became theological professors. One was John Murray, the other was Ned Stonehouse. They both went to Westminster eventually. But I’m no genius. Don’t get me wrong. I just like to study, and love to teach, and just the fun and the work that God has given me to do.

Having been a teacher for so long, and seeing what students need as they start off their careers as ministers, do you have any additional bit of advice?

Well, I think one of the great problems is the tension which most students feel between academics and spiritual life. This is a constant cause for discussion and concern, and to me there ought not to be any great tension between these things, because God has made us capable of handling both in unison without one being pitted over against the other. If we will faithfully honor Him by our devotional time and our walk with Him through the day, that makes our studier easier, there’s no question about, because we have inner peace that enables us to address ourselves to every task without confusion, and without anxiety. I think one can maintain this just as (he can maintain) the will to honor God by giving Him the first place, giving His Word priority in your life; then the tasks of study, of academics will fall into place much more readily than if one says "well I can't have my quiet time today, I've to do this, that and the other." Well, God knows all about that, and He is able to give us the acumen and the perserverance to stay in there and get those assignments, and more so if we give ourselves to Him at the beginning of the day, in His Word, and prayer. I've no doubt about that whatsoever. I've talked to a great many people about that and they've agreed that that's so. As soon as we short-circuit our spiritual life, we're going to find that the academics don't go as well.

amen
ATHLETICS AT FULLER
by
Bob Nilsack

The athletic program at Fuller is relatively new. But during its few years of existence it has grown so that it has now become one of the major programs at the seminary. The program features one team sport each term: football is played in the fall, basketball in the winter, and volleyball in the spring. In addition to the team sports, a number of individual sports are offered, such as: handball, ping-pong, pool, golf, and tennis. There is also the possibility of a two man volleyball tournament this year. Two different tournaments are held each term. Any suggestions you might have as to possible sports that can be played will be seriously considered.

Your athletic program is set up for a number of reasons. One is to provide you with an opportunity for physical exercise. There are many ways in which you can receive spiritual and mental exercise in your seminary life, but many students neglect their physical bodies. It is your responsibility to your Creator to be in good physical condition as well as mental and spiritual. Also, to be in sound physical condition will compliment your mental and spiritual self. If one is in poor shape, the other two will surely suffer.

In addition to recreation, the athletic program provides you with a chance for relaxation. Every student needs a break from the rigorous schedule of seminary life. The athletic program seeks to provide you with that break. While you are being given a chance to relax, you also will be having a lot of fun.

Recreation and relaxation are two obvious reasons for the athletic program, but there are also two other resulting advantages. One is fellowship. You will have an opportunity to have fellowship with those whom you compete against. This is especially true in the team sports, where you are united with other brothers and sisters for the purpose of working together to win a game. Because of this formation of a team, you will experience an even deeper fellowship with your fellow students. I, personally, can say that some of my closest friends at the seminary have come through the team sports I have participated in with them.

Finally, your athletic program will provide you with many new friends, friends whom you might not have met if you had not participated, simply because your schedules are so diverse that you would never have crossed paths during the week at school. Through the athletic program you are brought in contact with these people and friendships are made.

I would like to see each one of you participate in at least one of the scheduled sports. Pick a sport, any sport, and participate. Do not ever say that you do not have enough ability to participate. If the athletic program is set up only for those with ability, then we have wasted precious time and money. I stated the reasons for the program as recreation, relaxation, fellowship, and the chance to meet new people; nowhere in those purposes does ability enter in. In other words, this program is for everybody and that means YOU!

If you have any suggestions or comments, please let me know. Otherwise, I'll see you on the field!

Bob Nilsack, The Commissioner
WHY I WENT TO SEMINARY by John Knight

I said, "I want to belong somewhere, to something or something." I said, "I want to be fulfilled," and I said, "I hurt." You've stumbled with me through the tangled paths of time until somehow now you are here and I am here. What led an 8 year old boy, one blue skied hot summer afternoon, to say, "God, if your there I want to know,"? Then life's maze rushed by the dark high walls twisting, turning and all along I did not know where I was. There was nowhere. There was no one. There was no thing. I was lost. Then I knew what I wanted. And now I'm possessing it.

My request to know God, spoken some 23 years ago into what seemed then just empty sultry summer air, marked my first conscious moment of my race's deepest yearnings. Two years later, half-conscious, lying in a hospital bed, recuperating from the effects of the 1952 anesthetic, ether, I heard my dad laugh and say, "He's dead." In the stupor of ether I thought that I was in the room in spirit and heard my own dad laughing over my death. After I recovered from the retching disgust, I still did not speak my disappointment. In my mind I no longer belonged to my earthly father who could laugh at my death. I was physically alive but angry and alienated, suffering worse than physical death.

And two years more, 1954, on a boy scout camping trip I prayed with two scout leaders, "Jesus be my savior." I didn't know what I was doing, but believed it would help me know the God I thought was out there somewhere. Callow years, lonely years, evil years and empty days. Slowly it dawned on me, "John, you should be a preacher." Me so full of hate and loneliness and alienation and awful evil. "You want me?" I said. "I can't keep a promise to you God. You know I let you down all the time, I say one thing and do another. I don't like anybody. Nobody likes me and besides I'm no good and will never amount to anything anyway."

By that time it was 1960, I was 16 years old and most everyone, except the pastor of a little Baptist church which met in a country grange hall, everyone except that man could only laugh to think that I could be some sort of minister. In spite of this my heart burned to preach and he gave me opportunity. Oh those sermons were miserable failures. No spirit, no soul, only sin.

And 7 more years, 1967 and a quarter century from birth till then; I thought I was at the bottom. Somehow even at my lowest, worst moments I had a dim memory; I was a Christian. You could see a dark cloud mumbling churning in the air with lightnings and cracks of teeth-clattering thunder reverberating in the air, even that could not express the turmoil, desperation and emptiness of my living death. One night I faced responsibilities for my actions and the crush of guilt threatened to squeeze me out of existence. I cried out with my entire heart and being, "God help me!" and He did. Jesus Christ began His Lordship in this miserable failure. Slowly He has been bringing me up out of the muck and mire of my lost and lonely condition into the congregation of the living, His fellowship and body.

Four years of university, a degree and many side tracks have been set aside as He aided me to make a momentous decision 3 months ago in which I quite literally had to make a choice between the world's tantalizing offers at my weakest points and His call to give my whole self. I applied late to Fuller and only to Fuller, after counseling with my pastor who told me, "you had better go to Fuller instead of Harvard or Stanford." The chairman of the psychology department at my school thought I was crazy to reject his offers of Stanford, a teaching position and eventual national recognition
in psychology. The chairman of the religious studies department there thought me extremely foolish to reject his offer of admission to Harvard Divinity School and dreams of someday Cambridge or Oxford. But I knew I had to be a Godly man and only Fuller among the three mentioned schools could offer me the chance to grow to be a man of God in a community of Christian fellowship and academic excellence.

I belong here. I belong to the Lord JESUS Christ. I belong to His body. I am being fulfilled and when I hurt, it is in the grander context of His love. There is here. There is Him. There is His Church, I am found.

* * *

ELEMENTAL INFUSIONS: Malibu

The weekend was about life;
   it poured forth as water from a spring.
Up, way up, high
   atop an ancient wind and rain eroded hill
   butting into the sea
Three boys were sitting, sensing.
The air, the very ground held a ripeness,
   a fullness,
   missing in their city.
The sage
   green and tender from the spring rains
   offered up its spicy scent
   to be carried by its messenger
the wind.
An awakened herbal fertility of humas
   grown ripe in warm and wet
   hovered over shoe tops
   and
   stained 3 pairs of blue Levis.
The prickly pear cactus temptingly
   held forth its womb of life:
   a many-seeded pod of sweet red syrup
while down the hill
   in a slanting sea of green
   a father and mother stood still
   very much youths themselves,
   precariously picking black-eyed Susans
   for their little son.
A man, in a business suit
   speaking very properly with a foreign accent
   turned to face the breeze bringing moisture from the ocean
   felt his neatly engineered coiffure grow tousled in the wind
   and smiled.
Why No All-Seminary Retreat?

"The purpose of the organization shall be to serve the student body and to foster such activities in cooperation with the Administration of the Seminary as will tend to encourage spiritual growth, promote genuine community, and benefit its members."

Article II Constitution of the Associated Students of Fuller Theological Seminary

Last Spring the ASFTS and Presbyterian Minister's Fund sponsored an all-seminary retreat loosely titled "The Great Fuller Getaway," held at Gindling Hilltop Camp near Malibu. Due to lack of P-R and insufficient advance notice only about sixty students attended. However when they came home, some were seen leaping and dancing and praising God for the experience. They even convinced others, who did not come, to follow after this way. Some were converted in blind faith on the spot, and swore they wouldn't fail to miss next year's. Others heard preaching and testimony such as the following: "The week-end was about life, about growth as the body of Christ." A professor shared his boyhood, growing up "on the wrong side of the tracks," in Canada. Many married couples were seen walking together hand in hand, actually loving each other, in the context of seminary. At the height of the weekend, communion was held. At that very table a couple got in an argument that left their dinners cold and their baby hungry. Yet in the very act of sharing together the bread and the cup, as tears flowed, they were reconciled. "It was about awareness: the pain of isolation and detachment, and the joy of communion with God, His people, and His earth." Upon hearing words as these, even more were converted, eagerly awaiting the hope of next year's retreat.

Now the anticipated event has been postponed and/or canceled. Presumably the committee in charge of planning for the retreat felt there wasn't enough interest, or maybe even need. As a junior last year I found the retreat helpful in two ways: I came to know middlers and seniors whom I'd never run into, except maybe in football; and my wife felt that she was finally being recognized and assimilated as a part of our total ministry.

Perhaps you do not find "the retreat atmosphere" beneficial to maximizing your scholarly career here at Fuller. However, if you do, say so! Ask your student council member "Why no all-seminary retreat?" The student council is in charge of this event, whenever it is or isn't, and they represent you! Furthermore, if they don't hear your voice, they just hear the voices of 12-15 people, which is a high concentration of power without tangible representation.