

# College students DO have religion!

A NEWCOMER IN NORMAN FINDS THAT STUDENTS  
LIKE RELIGION—BUT NOT THE OLD AUSTERE KIND

**A**N assorted group of twenty or thirty students gather in a pleasant room in the Union building, settle down with a cup of coffee or tea, and begin talking. The group includes liberal arts students, engineers, journalism students, or representatives of many other divisions of the University.

It might easily be a friendly group gathering for an idle "session" of conversation. But it isn't. It's a new kind of approach to a better understanding of religion on the part of O. U. students.

The idea of a weekly "coffee" session on the campus for discussion of religious questions was started by Sterling W. Brown, who during this school year was appointed student counselor for the First Christian church.

As a result of his experiences, Mr. Brown, who came to Norman totally unfamiliar with the situation here and therefore is entirely unprejudiced, has come to the conclusion that University of Oklahoma students compare very favorably with the general public in their genuine interest in religion and in their standards of ideals and social life.

Young in appearance, Mr. Brown is seldom recognized as a minister.

"Sometimes I meet students and talk with them and they don't believe me when I tell them that I am a minister," he says. "I presume I don't look pious enough. The other day I was in the coffee shop with some friends and a young lady to whom I had just been introduced inquired as to what school I was in. She thought I was in law school. When I told her that I was a minister, she said, 'Hell, you're no minister.' To which I replied 'I am one of the best darn ministers you ever met.' We all laughed and then talked for thirty minutes on religion and college students. I found that she really cares about the things in life that really matter, in spite of her flippant manner."

Judged in terms of institutional loyalty and participation in formal religious activities, the college man about equals the plain man of the streets, Mr. Brown believes. Only about a third of our citizens are actually active in some religious organizations, he explains.

"But this is only one phase of the religion of an individual. There are three phases: beliefs and doctrines, the institutional relationship, and the expression of religion in life itself. All three phases must be considered.

"The college student is about as religious as he is healthy. He is idealistic, trustful, heroic, social, happy, and self-sacrificing. He is religious in the sense that he is bent upon attaining what he imagines to be the highest reality attainable.

"The ideas in a college man's religion are often in a flux. He holds on to some



*A pleasant social occasion is combined with serious discussion on religious problems. Mr. Brown is standing at the center.*

of his childhood beliefs and throws overboard others. In terms of logic he is consistently inconsistent.

"Typical is the reply of the college sophomore to the question as to what the argument concerning God was all about. 'Well, I'll tell you about this God argument. It is like this, there are some people who say there is a God; there are others who say there isn't. The truth of the matter lies about halfway between the two extremes.'

"Most college students have a concept of God, but it is often hazy and vague. It is by no means unusual for a student to declare himself to be an atheist. But in most cases what they mean is that they do not believe in the kind of God their fathers believed in. Most religionists would agree heartily with this disbelief. What the college man often fails to recognize is that the idea of God changes

with the shifting experiences of the race. Like his physical body, the religion of the college man is still in process of maturation.

"The college man gains from related fields of study much knowledge that adds to the content of his ideas on religion. Through courses in the physical sciences he comes to know, at least in a general way, the nature of the universe which is his home. He recognizes that the world in which he lives is exceedingly complex and that it has been in existence for many many years. He knows from experience and observation that there exists both good and evil in the world.

"Being an occasional attendant at a musical concert or even spending a few moments at an art exhibit, the college man develops a sort of quasi-tolerance for what other races have done. Through required readings he may even develop some sense of appreciation of good literature. In terms of the knowledge content of a college man's religion it may be said that he does not know exactly where he is going, but he wants to be on his way.

"The college man is often critical and pragmatic in his attitude toward institutions such as the church. He has learned from the social sciences that institutions are constantly changing; that they are means to an end; that they are created and recreated by man to meet his needs.

"To tell him that an institution is sacred, other than in the sense that it gains this quality through tradition and human loyalty, is to risk the affront of such an answer as 'So what?' or 'How do you get that way?' This seeming apathy is often indicative of a restless urge for a more adequate knowledge of a religion that will be intellectually respectable as well as emotionally appealing.

"It is in this area of a college man's relationship with religious institutions and organizations that he is weakest. It is unfortunate that most people judge his religion from this one area, failing to take account of his ideas about religion and their expression in the life process."

Mr. Brown points out that the college man has just broken his relationship with the institutions and organizations back

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## '37 Ready To Go!

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profession, Miss MacKenzie has served on the Executive Council of W. S. G. A., been on the Publications' Board, and in her junior year, she was a member of the Mortar Board honor class. She has also held offices in Chi Delta Phi, national literary fraternity for women, and Pi Beta Phi, her sorority.

Stewart Mark who was awarded the Dads' Day cup for being the most outstanding boy on the campus for 1936 and won the silver Letzeiser medal will receive a B. A. degree this spring. He says though, in reality he is just starting, for he is going into the law profession and will have two more years in the University.

In addition to making Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Delta Phi, national honorary legal fraternity, Mark is a member of Skeleton Key, honorary leadership and service fraternity, Pe-et, Phi Eta Sigma, Scabbard and Blade, Jazz Hounds, and Sigma Alpha Epsilon, social fraternity.

Two other honor students who will get their degrees and then continue in the Law School are James Tabor and Frank Hamilton.

Tabor, who has been elected president of the Interfraternity Council for next year and has been active in Y. M. C. A., in the History club, in Pe-et, and Delta Sigma Rho, national honorary debating fraternity, is winner of the gold Letzeiser medal this year.

He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Delta Phi, and Delta Tau Delta, social fraternity.

Hamilton is also a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Eta Sigma, the 1936 President's Honor Class, Phi Delta Phi, Skeleton Key, Pe-et and Sigma Nu social fraternity.

Prominent in the field of religious and social work is Mary Elizabeth Lockett, who also plans to attend school for another year and work for a master's degree.

Miss Lockett is fond of working with groups and has served as co-chairman of the state and regional council of the Y. W. C. A. and the Y. M. C. A. She also has found time to make Alpha Lambda Delta, national honor society for freshmen women, Mortar Board junior honor class, Mortar Board, Phi Beta Kappa and serve as president of the Social Work club.

A student who specialized in foreign language is Maurice Clancy, who had a major in Spanish and a minor in French and Government. This is in preparation for eventually going into the foreign service, but in the meantime, Clancy hopes to do foreign commercial work.

"I have always been interested in foreign languages and countries, especially

Latin America, but my big problem has been how to utilize my interest without going into the teaching field," Clancy said.

Clancy is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the 1936 President's Honor Class, Phi Eta Sigma, Kappa Gamma Epsilon, honorary modern language fraternity, Pe-et, International Relations club, Spanish club, French club, Pan-American Student Forum, Bombardiers, League of Young Democrats, the Oratorical Council and Delta Tau Delta social fraternity.

After being voted the most outstanding freshman girl at Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kans., Mildrew Andrews, a Fine Arts major, came to the University and has continued to win honors.

She has served as president of Mu Phi Epsilon, national honorary music fraternity for women, and represented the entire state of Oklahoma at this organization's convention in Oakland, Calif., last summer.

While a junior she was made a member of the Mortar Board honor class, and for the past year has served as vice-president of Mortar Board. She has been an assistant in the piano and organ departments at the University this year, and served as accompanist and soloist for the boys' quartet and WNAD orchestra tours. Alpha Lambda Delta made her an honorary member recently.

Next year Miss Andrews will go to the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where she has a scholarship to work on a master's degree in piano and organ.

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## College Students DO Have Religion!

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home. It is not easy to form new ones. Semi-religious organizations on the campus often get first place in the loyalty of the college man. These organizations maintain a moral tone and operate to sustain the idealistic tendencies of the college student.

"However, the college student does attend church on certain occasions and enjoys it. He is quick to commend when he feels that something has contributed to his religious life. He likes the religious person who is frank and honest in his convictions and opinions. He has no patience with such an attitude as was displayed by one minister who, when asked a candid question by a student replied, 'Young man, God moves in a mysterious way, and when you grow older, you will find the answer to your question.'"

But the truest indication of the college

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man's religion is its expression in his everyday life, Mr. Brown believes.

"The religion of any man is best judged by his actual living. I don't believe you could take an equal number of citizens from any community in America and find as high a type of social and personal life as you will find on the average college campus.

"I do not mean by this that I think the college man has a well developed religious life. He does not have. Furthermore, he often turns his back upon religious institutions that conserve the real value of life. But I mean simply that he is a choice reflection of our total American culture and must be judged in such terms. And his religion, evaluated on a basis of its three phases, is by no means hopeless. I personally feel that it is distinctly encouraging.

"I have come to believe in the college man and his religion. I believe in his attempts for the enrichment of life, and I respect his personality. For his religion, whatever its weakness, is motivated by the restless and impetuous search for the realization of his fondest dreams."

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## The College Fraternity on the Offensive

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or beams on the old ship and if they are barnacles they are going to be scraped off or in due time will slip off of their own accord when the ship gets a chance to rest in clear water.

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**T**HE Chapter Advisers are the backbone of a college fraternity. They are the real sergeants of the order to whom the buck is ultimately passed. It is to these heroes on the firing line—alas! too often unnoticed and unsung—that the fraternity should look to to fill places of leadership and responsibility.

I believe that the strengthening of this vital unit of fraternity administration should be given careful consideration by all our organizations. At the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Leadership School in August, 1937, the theme study will be the Alumni Advisory System and at our next National Convention all Chapter Advisers of long and faithful service who can be persuaded to be there will be given full recognition and honor.

In any event, nature's best law is working overtime for them; for they are getting the most out of fraternity anyway because they are putting the most into it. They are the ones who have discovered that the only Fountain of Youth is Youth.

They are the ones who see in fraternity a glorious adventure in corporate living and have made it their magnificent obsession.

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**O**NE of the most marked characteristics of a machine age is the tendency to glorify the commonplace and exalt the trivial. Education has suffered under a regime and the fraternity is doomed to perish unless it is allowed to exist only because of its ideals and spiritual qualities and to become disassociated from all forms of sensual pleasures.

One obligation of all fraternity secretaries is to help place the Founders' Day banquets and other public functions of the fraternity on a higher plane. Their task is to get the leadership of these affairs out of the hands of the perpetual adolescents of the order. Too many of our most substantial brothers—leaders in their community and potential workers for our organization—have been alienated because they have been brought to these parties under the guise of loyalty to their fraternities and then given cheap stuff for entertainment. It is a poor fraternity party where the members cannot entertain themselves.

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**A**NOTHER combination opportunity and duty of the fraternity secretary is to preserve and strengthen the ritualistic aspect of the college fraternity system. Ritualism has always been the distinguishing feature of college fraternities. College fraternities rest upon two broad foundations—gregariousness and idealism. The latter is super-imposed through the medium of a ritual upon the former which is a natural instinct of most members of the human race. Granting then that the first foundation is safe, the task of the organization which is to endure is to uphold its ideals of loyalty, integrity and brotherhood which some day, who knows, may become as instinctive in man as gregariousness.

Without ritual, dormitories and college halls will ultimately drive us to the wall. With it, fraternities will last as long as ritualism strengthens character, and character is the basis of friendship, and the bonds of friendship prevail.

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**M**Y whole theory of fellowship is built upon the Oxford system of man in association with his fellow man. It is essentially a give and take relationship. Everyone knows and admits that the social life among men in the various colleges is the distinguishing characteristic of the so-called Oxford training. It is some sort of relationship such as this that I covet for the men of the chapters of our fraternities.

Goodness knows, the men of America

need it badly enough. In their childhood they are tied to the apron strings of their mothers; in the public school system they are dominated by women teachers; during their college lives their spare time and much of the time they cannot spare is taken up with afternoon dates, morning dates, dates to the library, dates to classes, dates between classes, and a lot of other dates that are not on the dean's approved list, and as soon as they get out of college and get a job they get married. They never have one brief period in their lives when they can seriously study their fellowman and learn to associate with him and to appreciate all the splendor and goodness that can be drawn out of a man's character. There is nothing finer in the world than a deep-rooted friendship between man and man, but it takes time, toil, and thought to establish it and it is done most effectively during the college years.

Let us strive to the end that we can motivate all of our chapters with the true ideals of fellowship. The silly high school type of chapter, loosely organized, carelessly existing, believing that the badge and a good time is all there is to fraternity, is the barnacle on the great ship in which we are all riding.

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**N**OW this matter of vision which is so important for all fellowshippers, and especially the navigating officers, is not some elusive Holy Grail to be sought for in bright and shining armor with emblazoned banners held high aloft and trumpets sounding the call; but like the vision of Sir Launfal has to do with the every day, close at home, personal acts of living which assures getting the most out of life.

If a boy comes out of your chapters without having heard that it is bad form to swear in the presence of ladies, that a clean handkerchief is a good pocket accessory, that certain combinations of food and drink do not mix well, that daily exercise is healthful, that cheap literature like a shoddy suit of clothes not only lacks initial value but also brings later embarrassment, that you can get more exhilaration out of your dancing by gliding rather than toddling, that you ought not to pile tomato catsup on certain meats and that cigarettes between courses deaden the taste of food, certain advertisements to the contrary notwithstanding, then he has missed the "follow through" of corporate living.

Those superficial examples are chosen to suggest that before the young knight rides out into the cold hard world, the fraternity is his last chance to learn the subtle technique of far more consequential acts upon the successful performance of which depend the issues of happiness.