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An Historical Sketch with Philosophical Overtones

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AN HISTORICAL SKETCH
with
PHILOSOPHICAL OVERTONES

Taylor University has its roots in the church, and its history is the story of a struggle to create and maintain a culture and a climate for the true pursuit of truth. In denominational settings there is often less than total freedom to seek truth openly, and less than complete honesty in dealing with knowledge gained from books, libraries, laboratories, yes, and even life itself. Furthermore, more often than not, a denominational school operates within the highly political structure of a given church, and this impacts upon the administration to produce less than the best decisions in the academic arena.

Taylor's move to "disaffiliate" from the then Methodist Episcopal Church was not an effort to separate from the church, but to establish a relationship with the church at large in which that church would be even better served by education.

Accordingly, Taylor's position is that it serves, and hopes to be supported by, the more conservative and evangelical* segments of many denominations. The "mixture" of students from these churches contributes to the open climate

*The terms "conservative" and "evangelical" have evolved somewhat different connotations in recent years and may not exactly represent the thinking of the '30's, '40's, and '50's, but they are still better than "more spiritual."

for learning which avoids the denominational tendency to indoctrinate rather than educate. Convinced that all truth is God's truth, Taylor encourages students to grow as whole persons, including the spiritual aspects of personality and experience as well as all other parts of life and living.

Granted, this "church at large" is not an easily identifiable or approachable constituency. But the reputation for the University, created by the "product," its graduates, tends to attract young people from these "conservative and evangelical" segments of many denominations, and their presence helps to create a truly inter-(not non or anti) denominational climate and culture.

It is more difficult for the University to find and contact for support the people of this constituency, because of the absence of organizational structures, affiliations, etc., which denominations provide. But it is a choice that Taylor made because of a deep commitment to the free pursuit of truth and the opportunity for students to live, study, and grow in a climate of academic and spiritual freedom.

It is the implementation of this philosophy of Christian education in Taylor history that tends toward service to the world-wide church rather than to a particular denominational part of the church. It is also the basis for the kinds of specific services to the kingdom of God in the world that are described elsewhere in this paper.

--Milo Rediger