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Milo Rediger Writings & Addresses

Milo Rediger

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Notes for Inaugural Response

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NOTES FOR INAUGURAL RESPONSE

I. Meaning of Inauguration

While this is not a light occasion and I do not mean to be frivolous about it, I did find myself interested in knowing the meaning of the day, the convocation and the word. I found two dictionary definitions. The first one is: To set in motion. I know this cannot be the right one because I have been going round and round before today, so I will optimistically assume that the other is the correct definition for today; namely, to begin under favorable or auspicious circumstances, or with ceremony. Seriously, I deeply appreciate the ceremony. I appreciate your presence; I appreciate the academic attire; I appreciate the formality; I appreciate the serious dignity which surrounds me everywhere today.

All of this makes me very humble, and yet I know that it is not exclusively, or even primarily, for me. It is for a great idea; for a great institution; for a great task; for a great opportunity.

These are my thoughts today as I acknowledge my indebtedness to the fine trustees of this university, to the wonderful faculty and staff, to the students, to the alumni, to my family and to the many other friends who have so graciously taken the time to attend these ceremonies.

II. Recognition of Guests

I do not want to usurp the prerogative of the presiding officer, and I know there are many more distinguished guests here today than could be recognized in the time allotted to both of us. However, I want to make special mention of some.

This is, of course, a high occasion for Mrs. Rediger, Nelson and Wesley, as well as for me. I am happy that we can all be in the Taylor program together. Mr. Lester Gerig, chairman of the Board of Trustees, has certainly rendered meritorious service, especially during the past year. Mr. Austin E. Knowlton, the president of the Knowlton Construction Company, Columbus, Ohio, has contributed greatly toward the launching of the new Taylor and our ability to expand and develop the program here at Upland.

III.

On this occasion I will share with you my commitments. First, as a Christian I am committed to the love and service of Jesus Christ, Son of the Almighty God. As a Taylor man I am committed to the perpetuation of our great heritage, as it relates to our beginnings under the auspices of the Methodist Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I will always be a churchman interested in helping young people become established in their relation to the church. As president of a college I am committed to the opportunity for the pursuit of truth in a climate of Christian freedom and sincere inquiry. In the interest of breadth I would set the program in an interdenominational frame of reference, believing that the home church of every student is served best within this framework. As an educator I am committed to academic excellence, in personnel, in program and in individual achievement. As an administrator I am for progress. Like General Electric, progress is one of our most important products. Much is said these days about five- and ten-year plans; speaking of Taylor University, I could refer to a twenty-year plan which was already taking shape in my mind in 1945. As you well know, the roadway of progress is not always smoothly paved, but we are now beginning to realize the fruition of long-range planning, hopefulness and prayer.

In all of this, I am committed to the idea that a college should be a good citizen in its community. We should contribute to the culture, we should provide a stimulus to business, we should furnish people for the churches, and so on and on.

In summary, I believe with Henry VanDyke that "it should be the aim of education to make men first, and discoveries afterward". This is not to say that we discount research, but we must first be teachers, challenging and working with students in the exciting adventures of learning and growing.

We are a Christian college, not only by tradition and history, but also by re-evaluation and choice. My efforts in leadership will be to combine and coordinate these important elements of life and learning in the further building of a good Christian liberal arts college.