

Oct. 17, 1960

Dr. Finis Crutchfield  
Boston Ave. Meth. Ch.  
Tulsa, Okla.

Dear Finis,

Forgive me for firing another letter to you before you have time to answer my previous one.

I am enclosing a manuscript on which I have been working, which speaks to the question of "The Need and Promise of Methodist Theology". Although admittedly it is a rather lengthy and laborious manuscript, I would greatly welcome any comments you might have about its thesis or argument, if it seems worth your time to look over.

This paper has been wrought out of a long and difficult struggle of conscience. I am convinced that the time for silence is past, and the time has come for Methodists to undergo some serious theological self-scrutiny. Originally delivered at the Great Plains Regional Leadership Training Conference of the M.S.M. at Lake Poinsett, S.D. last summer, this paper intends to set forth a program for the recovery of our theological heritage in Methodist in accordance with the 1960 Episcopal Address.

Before this paper is re-drafted for publication, I would be very grateful for your frank response to it, if you should have any. If you think I have stated the case in excess at points, or if you think the thesis of the paper (that the Methodist heritage stands as a judgment and a resource for renewal in contemporary Methodism) is unable to be relevantly assimilated by current popular Methodism, then I would welcome your critique. I am much of the opinion that my work needs the scrutiny and wisdom which a practical church theologian such as yourself could give it. I honestly want my work to be relevant, helpful and fundamentally loyal to the Methodist Church. Frankly, Finis, I think you could help me attain this end.

Edrita and I are fine, and very happy with your new situation here. We are expecting a new arrival in April, and it is beginning to look like this may be home for us for some time.

With all good wishes---sincerely,

Thomas C. Oden



# EXAMINATION ON REINHOLD NIEBUHR

Thomas C. Oden  
Current Prot. Ethics

I. Identify. Indicate very briefly (in one sentence) why the name or term was mentioned. Choose five. (20 points).

Spanish revolution  
Kromadka  
Troeltsch  
Federal Education Bill  
Christianity and Crisis  
powerless security

The second report  
Will Herberg  
John T. Flynn  
Gifford lectures  
Ethical-universal Messianism

II. Reinhold Niebuhr uses the following dual categories. Define/term briefly and indicate how they are related. Choose three, (30 points).

1. nature/spirit
2. the central organizing principle of power/equilibrium of power.
3. tyranny/ anarchy
4. agent/norm
5. temptation/anxiety
6. love/justice
7. sensuality/pride
8. natural religion/Biblical revelation

III. Choose one: (20 points)

1. What is the thesis of the article "The Ecumenical Issue in the U.S."?
2. Indicate a single theme which runs consistently through Niebuhr's discussion of American Protestant worship, the church's "moral lead", Barth, Catholicism and ecumenism.

IV. Choose one: (30 points)

1. Discuss Niebuhr's understanding of sin. He says that sin is "inevitable but not necessary". Explain.
2. Discuss Niebuhr's view of society, with particular attention to the part played by power in social arrangements, utilizing illustrations from his essays to explain his thesis.