

February 27, 1962

Rev. Byron R. Johnson  
First Christian Church  
622 Topeka Blvd.  
Topeka, Kansas

Dear Rev. Johnson,

I received your inquiry of February 22 concerning the projected books for the course in Contemporary Theology this summer.

Although I have not decided precisely which books we will use, I would like to suggest several books which I think would form significant background reading for the course: Rudolph Bultmann Kerygma and Myth, Paul Tillich Systematic Theology, Volume II, Paul Tillich The Courage To Be, Karl Barth Dogmatics in Outline, Reinhold Niebuhr Essays in Applied Christianity.

Looking forward to meeting you this summer I remain,

Yours cordially and sincerely,

Thomas C. Oden



## THE FUTURE: ANXIETY OR FAITH

Thoughts for consideration on Saturday

The normal relationship between the Church and the world is that of dialogue. The whole New Testament underlines that we are not "of the world" but are sent "into the world" as ambassadors of a new and heavenly Kingdom. We are citizens of the Kingdom and therefore, while sent into the world, we are always strangers in it. The Church and its members are both independent from the world and responsible for it. It is their vocation to be, in the very midst of the world, an evidence of the presence of God. Christian witness consists in manifesting or making God known; in bringing to men the word of God; in continuing the work of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word that has come among men.

--- Philippe Maury, Politics and Evangelism, p. 40

We have seen how the morality of modern civilised man has turned out to be a terrible thin covering of ice over a sea of primitive barbarity. We have an art that can apparently offer us nothing better than a confirmation of our own disintegration. And we have Christian churches which have only occasionally borne a clear witness in the midst of disaster ...this then is the world we older people have to show and pass on to you younger folk. This is what it was developing into in the years of our prime, when we were in positions of leadership or responsibility. How can we claim a respectful hearing from you? The usual complaint of the old about the young might well be reversed today, and you might ask us what we really feel about not being able to bequeath you anything better--how we feel about having to send you on your journey from such unworthy beginning. But I shall probably not be wrong if I assume that you are far too preoccupied with yourselves to worry us with such questions--too preoccupied with your own question: where do we go from here? It will indeed be far more your own question since you will have to rely on yourselves for the answer to a much greater degree than we did forty years ago and than did very many generations before us. In many matters it will be almost impossible for you to establish any link with the past. I wonder if you realise what a privilege that is however? We have no right at all to prevent you from examining very freely and very strictly everything that has been transmitted to you, or from forming your own opinions. Your poverty implies a splendid freedom from preconceived ideas and judgments which we of the older generation used secretly to yearn for, but which could not be our lot at that time.

--- Karl Barth, Modern Youth, a talk given  
in Budapest in 1948