

July 18, 1962

Dean Joseph Quillian
Perkins School of Theology, S.M.U.
Dallas 5, Texas

Dear Joe,

It was a real pleasure to see you on my recent trip to Dallas. I have thought many times of the conversations we had the last year I was there and appreciated the helpful counsel I received from you.

During the past two years I have a number of times started to sit down and write you a letter about what has happened since I have been here and how I have changed and been reshaped in this context, but always when I started to do so I thought, "No, it won't be long till I will see you and then can chat at greater length about things." But despite the fact that we would have liked many times to have visited our friends in Dallas we have seemingly found ourselves unable to come for the past two years. Likewise my anticipated conversation with you had to be delayed.

Consequently you can imagine my disappointment when, upon seeing you on our recent trip and visiting for a few minutes it became apparent that, due to your just having arrived home from a long trip and I presume matters having piled up on you during that time, we still would not be able to have a more leisurely chat.

Therefore, since it may be some time before our paths cross again, I just feel suddenly moved to write you about things and how they are going. After returning from Dallas I began a summer term teaching a course in "Contemporary Theology", focusing on Reinhold Niebuhr, Tillich, Barth and Bonhoeffer. Now that this course is pretty well underway I am riding a little easier in the saddle, in contrast to the spring months which were terribly demanding.

Joe, there is actually only one thing I really want to tell you: I think you were exactly right a couple of years ago when you advised me to regard my leaving Perkins and coming to Phillips as an opportunity for new growth and development in independent directions, instead of the rather morose prospect which for a time it seemed to be.

I want you to know my considered judgment that this context has been good for me, as you anticipated, for a number of ~~reasons~~ rather surprising: (1) The ecumenical dialogue has been immensely helpful and significant for me. I have found in discussing many of the most important issues of faith and order---the Sacraments, the ministry, the nature of the church---that I have a lot to learn by listening to others, and I hope something to say from my own tradition. The Disciples have made me feel very much at home, and provided a context in which genuine dialogue was possible.

(2) My interests have firmed up and become more clearly defined since I have been here. I am now ready to "center down" and move toward increased competence in a more limited area. Within the next three years I hope to take a year in Germany (probably in Berlin with Gollwitzer and Schrey or in Tübingen) and pursue this interest with more thoroughness. What is it? The emerging new literature on the laity, both Catholic and Protestant. This is the most exciting and relevant body of literature taking shape, in my judgment, under the general area of Christian ethics, and it ties in significantly with my dissertation study on the concept of obedience, which I am still working on. Also I am interested in getting a manageable portion of the Catholic-Protestant dialogue literature and working more intensively on a small piece of that pie, and nowhere are the Catholics doing more significant thinking, in my judgment, than on the laity.

(3) While at Phillips, despite a heavy teaching load, I have somehow managed to keep alive my interests in writing. I just finished editing six essays on "The Renewal of the Laity", written by Bill Webber (East Harlem Prot. Parish), Eberhard Muelhäuser (Bad Boll Evangelische Akademie), Bob Raines, Ralph Morton (Iona), Joe Mathews and Art Brandenburg (Community of Lay Scholars), to be published this summer by the M.S.M. During this past spring term I have been working on a series of six Bible studies on the Word, the World and the Sacrament, also soon to be published by the Methodist Board of Education for the M.S.M. I'll send you a copy, if you wish, when they arrive. More significantly, however, I have been working on a ~~project~~ project, originally done for the ~~Memphis~~ Memphis Fellowship, which consists of a dialogue or conversation between a Marxist, a psychotherapist, a beatnik (repr. popular existentialist position) and a Christian on the situation of man in a society of abundance, which Westminster Press, thanks to Jim Donalson, is interested in.

TO: ALL MINISTERS
FROM: THE COMMITTEE ON THE MINISTRY



Dear Pastor:

We are seeking to serve you in your ministry in every way we can. The many demands on us all make it necessary for us to work together in every possible way to fulfill our ministries. We hope to be able to provide you with the resources and materials that will help you most in guiding young people in your local congregation toward the ministry.

Will you please provide the information that is requested and return to the State Office for our information? WE WOULD LIKE FOR EVERY CHURCH IN THE STATE TO RETURN THIS BLANK. If you feel you need to write more information, please write on the back of the sheet.

PLEASE CHECK THE STATEMENTS THAT MOST NEARLY INDICATE WHERE YOUR CHURCH IS IN THE GUIDANCE AND RECRUITMENT PROGRAM:

_____ We plan to begin the D.G.R.S. (Disciples Guidance and Recruitment Services) this fall.

_____ We do not know what the D.G.R.S. Program is.

_____ We would like to know more about the D.G.R.S. Program.

_____ We have counselors who work regularly with our young people in the Youth Program.

_____ We do not intend to take any steps involved in the D.G.R.S. Program.

Signed _____

Office in Church _____

Name of Church _____

Address of Church _____

Please return by July 15 to: Committee on the Ministry
c/o Oklahoma Association of Christian Churches
Box 3537
Oklahoma City 6, Oklahoma

KRC/lw
7/1/62 - Monthly Mailing

I have been gratified that this dimension of my vocation has seemed to grow rather than diminish since I have been here. But there have been some disappointments. The little essay on "The Need and Promise of Methodist Theology" in the Christian Advocate last year elicited a terrific quantity of mail from all over (all the way from Turkey), but the much more significant (at least to me) essay on German-American dialogue in ethics, "Ist Gottes Gebot Zweideutig?" in the Zeitschrift für Evangelische Ethik, which was deliberately designed for sparking conversation, has yielded only a few responses from abroad and none from this country.

We will be involved during the coming year in a complete review and overhaul of our curriculum. Our present curriculum has been in effect three years. It was partially patterned after the Perkins curriculum. Anyway, the coming year looks like a year of change. We will work on three or four new faculty appointments next year (OT, Christian Education, Missions and Pastoral Care), and those moves will be terribly important in shaping the faculty here---by the way if you have any suggestions on any of those areas they would be greatly appreciated. As for the matter about which we spoke briefly concerning the request for resignation of the man on our faculty with tenure (and incidentally, as you might imagine, I was miffed at myself for taking up the short amount of time I had talking with you in the discussion of this very involved and rather parochial matter) that whole affair is now closed, by the professor's choice, since he resigned and did not request any further hearings. I incidentally did not tell you, concerning that matter, that Albert Outler was of tremendous help to me in determining what the appropriate action of the faculty might be under such circumstances, since he happened to be at Phillips presenting the Davies Lectures during the time the thing broke. Had it not been for his advice that correct procedures should be pursued, I might have peremptorily and stupidly resigned and compounded the difficulty, so Albert's presence at the right moment seemed providential.

I must close. I think you get the picture. Joe, if anything brings you to Enid for any reason, I would certainly cherish the opportunity of a good long chat with you. As you know, I think very fondly and admiringly of the whole crew and operation which you shepherd, and I would like to keep in touch insofar as possible, despite the mile, with you and the rest.

Cordially,

Thomas C. Oden

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

These set-up meetings are to further introduce the plans to the membership. Much more, these meetings will help by getting the program "off the ground". By their nature the sessions should be attended by at least 10% of the resident membership of the participating congregations. To facilitate this attendance, 20 meetings have been spread throughout the state across a 17-day period.

Dates, places, times of
SEPTEMBER SET-UP MEETINGS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Time</u>
Sept. 11	Ponca City First Church	7:30 p. m.	Sept. 20	Oklahoma City First Church	7:30 p. m.
Sept. 12	Tulsa First Church	7:30 p. m.	Sept. 21	Clinton First Church	7:30 p. m.
Sept. 13	McAlester First Church	7:30 p. m.	Sept. 22	Hobart First Church	7:30 p. m.
Sept. 14	Shawnee First Church	7:30 p. m.	Sept. 23	Woodward First Church	3:00 p. m.
" "	Poteau First Church	7:30 p. m.	" "	Alva First Church	7:30 p. m.
Sept. 15	Durant First Church	7:30 p. m.	Sept. 24	Guymon First Church	7:30 p. m.
Sept. 16	Ardmore First Church	3:00 p. m.	" "	Vinita First Church	7:30 p. m.
" "	Duncan First Church	7:30 p. m.	Sept. 25	Okmulgee First Church	7:30 p. m.
Sept. 17	Chickasha First Church	7:30 p. m.	Sept. 26	Broken Bow First Church	7:30 p. m.
Sept. 18	Lawton First Church	7:30 p. m.	Sept. 27	Antlers First Church	7:30 p. m.

Participation Costs

Each church will share the cost by contributing 60¢ per resident member. However, there is a maximum of \$600.00. This pro rate participation will make the program equitable.