

Feb. 8, 1960

Dr. Charles M. Clarke  
809 Greenwood,  
Denton, Texas

~~Rev. Dr. William Slack, Sr.~~  
Dr. William Slack  
First Methodist Church  
Denton, ~~Oklax~~ Tex

Rev. Richard Bright  
Denton Wesley Foundation  
Denton, ~~Oklax~~ Texas

Dear Dr. Clarke,

I had the privilege of talking with Dr. Slack when he was at Minister's Week. I ~~shared with him my continuing interest in the project at Denton.~~ And he was kind to call my attention ~~again~~ again to the experimental character of the project and the great hope that ~~ax~~ all you who are involved in planning it have for it.

*I would like to indicate continued & increased interest in the project*

I have had some time to re-think my plans, and would like to report to you some of my reflections <sup>on</sup> about the matter. I ~~hope-you-do-not-think-me-brash~~ have several hesitations about <sup>it</sup> the positions, and several things I would like to propose for your consideration. I trust that you will not think me brash, and I see no reason why we should not be perfectly candid about our <sup>mutual</sup> attitudes and responses. Let me toss out some ideas which I have been mulling over, and see how they bounce with you and with other members of the committee.



Doubtless some of the ideas you have already considered, and some are either too large/<sup>to be practical</sup> or too small to occupy your attention, but I ~~shall~~ will share them with you nonetheless and call for <sup>write</sup> your ~~most~~ candid response to them.

(1) One minor item concerns the title of the chair. The reason I am not entirely sold on the present title, "Ecumenical Bible Chair" is two-fold: (a) <sup>the title seems to presuppose that the field</sup> ~~my field of scholarship and~~ <sup>of special competence of its holder would be Biblical studies, rather than</sup> ~~competence is not first of all Biblical studies, but rather~~ <sup>more broadly,</sup> theology and ethics; and (b) the title seems to presuppose that the preeminent concern<sup>s</sup> of <sup>the</sup> ~~a~~ department of Religion ~~is~~ in ~~xxxxxxx~~ a tax-supported institution ~~is~~ the study of the Bible. I think you would agree that this is a narrower definition than the task/<sup>you have</sup> ~~is~~ envisaged for this chair. ~~All who~~ ~~reflect upon it would readily agree that~~ Courses such as philosophy of religion, Christian ethics, history of religions thought, Church history, psychology of religions, comparative religion, and many others <sup>in the area of study of religion</sup> ~~courses appropriate for this department~~ do not properly fit under the category of ~~the title~~ "Ecumenical Bible Chair".

I would much prefer the title "Ecumenical Chair in Theology and Ethics", or "Chair of Ecumenical Theology", and of these two I slightly prefer the former, since it seems to me to <sup>include most of the</sup> ~~be-inclusive~~ ~~concerns of the chair as commonly~~ conceived by all <sup>who are</sup> interested. The term theology is a better ~~xxx~~ term than "religion" since the adjective "ecumenical" is quite appropriately a part of the title of the chair. I would like to see the Department named "Department of Religion" and the Chair named "Ecumenical Chair in Theology and Ethics". If, however,

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some were concerned to keep the Biblical idea in the title, I think a more fitting ~~nomenclature~~- nomenclature would be ~~either~~ "Ecumenical Chair of Biblical Theology". ~~or simply~~- "Ecumenical Chair of Biblical Studies". Another possibility, which would be still further down on my list, would be "Ecumenical Chair ~~of~~ <sup>the</sup> in Philosophy of Religion". Of course, the title is not as important as the conception that is commonly shared as to the ~~task~~ task of the Chair, but sometimes, as you know, the title seems ~~subky~~ to mould the task.

(2) A much more important tentative proposal which I would like to toss out for your consideration is the possibility of transforming the present ~~board~~ ecumenical Board into a working and continuing committee which would deliberately commit itself to <sup>the</sup> studying ~~the~~ ~~not only~~ not only the local situation in Denton, but also the general question of ~~the~~ the tax-supported <sup>school</sup> ~~institution~~ <sup>via & via</sup> and an adequate curriculum in the study of Religion <sup>as</sup> as a ~~significant~~ significant discipline which might take its place among the other arts and sciences. (Regardless of who takes the position at NTSC Denton,) I would be very much gratified ~~to~~ if <sup>should</sup> some serious program of study ~~might continue~~ ~~to~~ <sup>should</sup> evolve out of the groundwork thus far laid. This continuing committee could either be formed out of the present Board, or by some other process of choice, but <sup>it could set</sup> ~~I would like to see it set~~ itself to the task of a long-range ~~deliberate~~ inquiry into the broader question of the teaching of religion in state colleges, <sup>and to</sup> study <sup>of</sup> other tax supported universities which <sup>desplay</sup> ~~have~~ fully authorized and respected departments of Religion, and <sup>to</sup> act as a spearhead for the promotion of academic ~~respect~~ respect for <sup>and confidence in</sup> the department of Religion at NTSC <sup>State College</sup> North Texas State College.

