

June 21, 1960

NYGEC.F.
475 Riverside
NY 27, N.Y.

Dear sirs,

I am scheduled to be a resource person in a Methodist student regional meeting late this summer at Lake Poinsett, S.D. They will be following the "Life and Mission of the Church" Emphasis of the W.S.C.F.

I do not have any of this literature. I think it would be immensely helpful if you would choose some of the crucial pieces of literature which would express the central thrust of this theme and emphasis, and send it to me, billing me for whatever charges are involved. I hope you will know what I am talking about, since I am at a loss to describe it any better than this. I think the general theme for the conference is "The Church's Mission Within the College and University". Just send me all the free literature you have relating to this, and that portions of the literature which is not free which might be helpful in orienting me to this theme.

Also, I have another request which might be tougher for you to fulfill. The WCC and National Council of Churches publish study reports and pamphlets all the time which I think would be of interest to me. But I do not know how to order them. I would like very much to be supplied with a list of current study materials. If I could order these as a standing order, e.g., all the materials coming from the department of the laity, that would please me even more. Can you get me on the track and ask someone at 475 Riverside to supply me with this. It would be a great help to me. Thank you.

Sincerely and gratefully,

Thomas C. Oden

Address after Aug. 1: Phillips University
Enid, Oklahoma

who I am. Barth would build his ethics on this methodological cornerstone: "The question of Jesus Christ and the question of my true humanity are identical"¹

To execute ethical inquiry from this presupposition is a difficult enough task without another limitation which plagues Barth's ethics, as it did Bultmann's, viz., the Kantian pre-understanding of the task of ethics which puts the whole inquiry in the context of the framework of obedience. Barth is required by the narrowness of his view of ethics and the limited usefulness of his ethical tools, to try to say all that he needs to say about freedom and permission and self-determination in terms of an ethics of obedience, a perspective which he gains from Kant much more than from the Biblical witness. Had he been able to use a more pluralistic ethical scheme, and the linguistic and analytical tools provided by axiological, teleological, aretological and eudamonistic approaches to ethics, he might have avoided much of the confusing dialectical magic he tries to work in relating freedom and obedience.

5. Prior to plunging headlong into a critique of Barth's views, however, it would be well for us to review the chief findings of our study in Barth and cite his major contributions to a contemporary Protestant doctrine

¹K.D. 3/2, p. 48. Compare this with Bultmann's statement: "The question of God and the question of myself are identical".