

An Appreciation

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The retirement of Dr. Julian C. McPheeters from the presidency of Asbury Theological Seminary is a time for reviewing briefly the history of the years of service rendered and for the expressing of appreciation. The writer of this article has been connected with Asbury Theological Seminary during all the years of Dr. McPheeters' presidency either as a faculty member or dean. Dr. McPheeters assumed the presidency in 1942. As dean, working closely with the president, he has come to know him quite intimately in matters pertaining to the operation of the school.

Dr. McPheeters has given active and effective leadership in the growth of the Seminary. From one building, the institution has grown to its present status with a total plant worth more than a million dollars and an endowment fund of almost three million dollars. This enlargement has taken place in the twenty years of the retiring president's leadership. Progress in a school such as Asbury Seminary cannot, however, be measured adequately by the size of the campus, the number and type of buildings, and the dollar-size of its endowments.

Progress must be measured in large part by more vital and living things: the size and caliber of the student body, the size and the academic qualifications as well as the consecration of its faculty, and the success and dedication of its alumni. From a very small group of eighty-nine men and women in 1942, there has been a steady and stable growth, until today the student body numbers two hundred and fifty-six.

But this is not all. One of the great and essential strengths of any educational institution is the size and quality of its constituency. Dr. McPheeters, through his spiritual leadership, has been instrumental in building a great and responsive constituency whose backing in prayer and gifts has meant much across the years.

Perhaps one of the most important items, and one that should certainly be mentioned in this brief review, is the continuing

emphasis upon the prayer life of the total Asbury Seminary family. Under Dr. McPheeters' leadership and urgent appeals as well as practical example in this area, the Seminary has become a veritable School of Prayer. Emphasis on the personal prayer life, prayer cells, prayer chains and nights of prayer, has brought very real results in the blessing of God upon the program and world-outreach of Asbury Theological Seminary. This has been one of the major accomplishments of the McPheeters' administration. Asbury Seminary has been "going forward on its knees."

This historical review has been all too brief to reveal satisfactorily the full impact of the life of the president upon the growth--material and spiritual--of the institution of which he has been the chief administrative officer for the past twenty years. Deep appreciation upon the part of the total Seminary family is due Dr. McPheeters in view of the large contribution he has made.

And now, some words of personal appreciation. The president and the dean, due to the very nature of the case, have worked together closely and rather intimately during the years, so much so that this writer has as a result come to have a larger understanding and deeper appreciation of the man. There has seldom been a meeting of any duration but what was closed with earnest prayer by the president. One would leave his office with a sense that here was a man of prayer, a man who was in touch with God and who seemed to live with the consciousness that God was present and available in every life situation. And during these years there have been burdens many, and days of almost heart-breaking concern. There have been times of deep sorrow and personal loss, as when his life-long companion slipped away into the heavenlies. It was the writer's privilege to have some little part in this crucial experience. There has never been a man who in passing "through the valley of the shadow" showed a greater confidence and trust in God than President McPheeters.

His joyous Christian experience, his radiant life, his ability to enter into periods of relaxation with a maximum of fun and real enjoyment, have set an example for all. His youthfulness of spirit and his vigor of body and mind are exemplary as a pattern for all his colleagues.

Here is a man who made it his business to be concerned for those who were called of God to work under his leadership as

president of Asbury Theological Seminary. We have felt always that here was a friend and brother on whom we could count. He would "go to bat" for any member of the Asbury staff in any hour of need even at the cost of some criticism of himself. This is a friend indeed.

By any and every count, Dr. McPheeters, you have been the "man of the hour" for God and Asbury Theological Seminary. We deeply appreciate all that you have been able, under God, to accomplish in the life of our beloved institution. We want you to know that as you lay down the reins of the administrative leadership of the Seminary, our prayers are with you. And we rejoice that you will still be with us, serving in a most important phase of the Seminary's life. Our prayers shall constantly support you in this task.