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John Allen Chalk: Personal Correspondence

John Allen Chalk

8-14-1969

From/To: J. Robert Ross (Chalk's reply filed first)

J. Robert Ross

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August 14, 1969

Dr. J. Robert Ross
Alabama A. & M. College
Normal, Alabama 35762

Dear Bob:

I want to apologize for my extremely tartly reply to your kind letter of February 21. At the time your letter came, I was in the throws trying to get everything arranged for my move to Atlanta. I was admitted without problem to Columbia Theological Seminary and had looked forward with great anticipation to working there, but as you may have heard by now I made the decision at the last minute to remain here in Abilene to preach for the Highland church. I don't know that I can yet get a hold of all the elements in this decision. I have seen the deep needs at Highland through my three and one-half years of personal, direct contact with the congregation and felt a great sense of responsibility when the elders asked me to stay. I have, on the other hand, been deeply saddened by not getting to go on to school at this time. I continue to pray that God's will will be worked in this matter however, in some way in the future.

Unfortunately, I have no advise I can give regarding your letter. Of course, you may^{now} by now found a relationship that is satisfying and therefore do not need what you asked for in your letter. I do hope that you have found or will find the kind of relationship that can allow you to speak and live your convictions within the framework of the fellowship of churches of Christ. I feel strongly about doing everything we can to continue within this framework. This is where I have been led and this is where, until I am led somewhere else, I am going to be as responsible as possible. This responsibility, however, means speaking the truth but it also means speaking the truth so that I am understood. My special burdens are in two areas: understanding God's Word well enough to speak convincingly to the real ills that are among us and presenting these understandings effectively.

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Page 2, Dr. Robert Ross

I have attached a copy of the only position I know of that is open and that you might be interested in. I think you could disregard the salary because a man of your qualification could certainly be supported much more fully than that. I do think they would consider a man of your caliber even though they had planned to look for someone with much less training experience.

Again, forgive me for this tartly reply. Your letter has been on my desk all these months but have simply not found time to reply.

Fraternally yours,

John Allen Chalk

JAC:lc

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THE THIRTEEN-COLLEGE CURRICULUM PROGRAM

ALABAMA A. & M. COLLEGE

Normal, Alabama 35762

February 21, 1969

Mr. John Allen Chalk
c/o Herald of Truth
P.O. Box 2439
Abilene, Texas 79604

Dear John:

Perhaps you remember me from the Atlanta conference on race relations. I hope this letter is not an imposition, but you are one the ^{of} very few people who might have any idea of what I am talking about.

First, let me extend to you my best wishes and offer my prayers for God's blessing upon you in your proposed student work in Atlanta. Having lived there for six years I can appreciate the need.

I also hear that you will be in Columbia Theological Seminary. That will be a great experience, I am sure, for you as it was for me. I found the Presbyterians to be cordial, full of grace and kindness. Their theology is solid stuff. You will be well fed.

As you may know, I am completing my doctoral dissertation for the Ph.D. in systematic theology from Emory. My teaching experiences here at A & M this year have been both revealing and rewarding to me. However, I feel a need to be more directly involved in the ministry of the Word of God. Unfortunately, two churches here have politely refused any assistance from me. I had hoped to use my campus contacts for the Lord, but the lack of a church as a base of operations is a distinct hindrance.

And this brings me to a question I have. You have been able to maintain fairly good contacts in the mainline churches without compromising your convictions. (Although I occasionally hear your name defiled in these quarters.) However, I started out with a side line segment of the brotherhood and then earned a worse reputation by going to seminary and grad school, not to speak of my inter-racial contacts.

But to come to the point--do you know of any place in the brotherhood that might be interested in me? I am particularly interested in teaching theology or student personnel work or university campus ministry. Leroy Garrett--who is really an old conservative--says "stay with us". But I wonder if the Lord wants me to forget about the ministry of the Word and warm a church pew. In short, although I want to stay, is there any real place of service for me among the churches of Christ?


Your suggestions will be greatly appreciated. If you know of anyone who might be interested in this inquiry, please pass it along to him. I will enclose a vita for your convenience. Recommendations from elders in every church in which I have ever served can be obtained.

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J. Robert (Bob) Ross