


Newsletter: The Center for Professional Ethics, May 1979

Case Western Reserve University

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Case Western Reserve University, "Newsletter: The Center for Professional Ethics, May 1979."
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On Saturday, March 31, 1979, the Professional Ethics Planning Committee (PEPC), hosted a Conference entitled: "Personal Integrity and Professional Life: The Socialization of the Student." It was attended by nearly 100 people from every part of Case Western Reserve University.

The Professional Ethics Planning Committee was called together by Bob Clarke in the fall of 1978 to explore possible directions for a U.C.M. ministry with professional students at Case Western Reserve University. The Committee consisted of eight students from a variety of professional schools, Professor Robert Lawry of the Law School and Bob Clarke. We used Sissela Bok's book, Lying, as a common focus and then planned the March 31st Conference.

We asked Professor Lawry, who moderated the Conference, to write an article concerning the themes we were attempting to surface. His response is in form of an open letter to Bob Clarke. You will enjoy meeting him as he shares from his heart the depth of what the Conference meant and can mean.

Dear Bob,

Although it is not my custom to publish private letters for all the world to see, something about our Conference on Personal Integrity and Professional Life bids me to resist the customary in this instance -- as our rag-tag group did in planning the event itself, and as you did in sending personal, written thank yous even to those of us who helped to plan and execute the Conference. Changes in habit and attitude do not normally occur with the happening of an event. And yet:

All the indices agree: it went well, this one-day Conference on the Socialization of the Professional Student. We, who were insiders, nodded and smiled at each other; it was the beginning we had hoped for. More importantly, those who came -- almost 100 strong, from Nursing, SASS, the Business School, Law, Medicine, Case Tech, Western Reserve College, Library Science, the Campus Ministries -- were unanimous: it had some flaws, but it went well; it was a good beginning.

Why do you think it went well? My answer is too simple, but I think essentially right. Those who came were full of good will. Attitude is everything. And too, those who performed were capable and full of care. Atmosphere is everything else.

No one doubts the existence of the problem. Our keynoter, Ted Mearns, said it best: in the technocratic society, skills and efficiencies -- the important "means" -- threaten to overwhelm purposeful "ends", even humanness itself. It surprised some, but not most, to discover that this problem is not unique to one profession; indeed, as one of the undergraduates put it, it is not unique to all the professions: it is the central fact of our cultural life.

Recognizing the general problem, of course, was only our first task. Remember how the Committee met at your home before Christmas to think through how to plan a Conference that would invite the many

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This Newsletter is published periodically during the academic year by the University Christian Movement in Cleveland. If you would like to receive it, or for further information on our program, call (216) 687-1727 or write to the Rev. Robert Clarke, 2200 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44115.

Volume VII, No. 3 May, 1979

Because of the length of our main article, we are not including a program report in this issue. Look for it in our June issue.

Our June issue will center on some of the issues men are facing today. It will include some of the trends which surfaced in the second annual Men's Conference held the same day as the conference reported in this issue.

THE UNIVERSITY CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT IN CLEVELAND
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