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Theological Education at Duke University, 1925–1950

OF ALL THE PROFESSIONAL schools that were built around Trinity College in the gradual creation of a complex research university, none was more important to President Few than what was originally called the School of Religion. This was so not simply because Few himself was a deeply religious man. Nor was it merely because James B. Duke, in his indenture making provision for the new university, had paid particular homage to religion: "I recognize that education, when conducted along sane and practical, as opposed to dogmatic and theoretical lines, is, next to religion, the greatest civilizing influence," he had declared. And J. B. Duke had gone on to urge that the courses at the new university should be arranged "with special reference to the training of preachers, teachers, lawyers and physicians."[1]

If neither Few's nor J. B. Duke's personal beliefs were the basic explanation for the priority that Few gave to the School of Religion, one might well ask, what was? The answer lay in the type of university that Few first envisioned and then persuaded his coworkers and allies, including J. B. Duke, to support. Obtaining his doctorate in English at Harvard in the 1890s, Few had watched Harvard's president, Charles W. Eliot, during a portion of the four decades that Eliot led in what Few termed the transformation of "a provincial New England college into a true American university," and Few became throughout the remainder of his life a close student of higher education in America.[2] Keenly sensitive to the inherent tension between the teaching and research functions of major universities such as Harvard, and quite properly fearing that undergraduate educa-

tion could easily be given short shrift in the rush toward graduate and professional training, Few meant for Duke University to be different in several ways. One would be its emphasis on both teaching and undergraduate education, matters that some research universities notoriously downplayed.

Few also had early arrived at the belief that a serious rift had developed between many of the leading universities and religion. Not only were state-supported institutions inhibited in their approach to religion by the constitutional wall separating church and state, but many of the private or voluntarily supported universities had so distanced themselves from their church-related beginnings that few vestiges of the original ties and common purposes survived. Having fought for and gained freedom in religion, too many educational institutions took that victory to mean, according to Few, freedom from religion. A trustee of Duke who also served as the president of the Association of American Colleges, John W. Chandler, asserted late in 1988 that "in too many contemporary universities the conversational range is artificially and unrealistically narrow in that it excludes or is embarrassed by questions of values and faith."[3] Few began commenting on the same development even before he became the president of Trinity, and the avoidance of just such narrowness or embarrassment became one of his prime goals, first for Trinity and then for Duke.

"Material progress, enlightened government, and popular education are not enough to insure our well-being," Few asserted in 1909. "If in our eagerness to progress in these directions we neglect the cause of religion, we shall be like the foolish man who cut off his right hand in order that the left hand might be strengthened." In order to have a stable, vigorous civilization, Americans would always need "to cultivate a virile and aggressive religious faith" and to make "education and religion mutually helpful and both contributory to human progress."[4]

Recognizing that Trinity's location in the South posed real problems as well as offered great opportunities, Few envisioned the institution as having the "further duty of mediation between the religious conservatism of this region and the great intellectual ferment of the age."[5] The South's religious conservatism, which Few spotlighted long before World War I, had, by the time Duke University was established in the mid-1920s, developed a powerful fundamentalist wing, and the "duty of mediation" that Few had described had become more urgent than ever.

For President Few, as for a significant portion of those who worked closest with him in leading Trinity College and then in organizing and launching Duke University, the motto of the college and then of the university—*Eruditio et Religio,* Knowledge and Religion—was no mere shibboleth. Likewise, the commanding presence of the great, towering chapel

that J. B. Duke wanted on the high ground in the center of the Tudor Gothic buildings that he provided for Duke University's new West campus was no simple architectural or aesthetic device. Rather it was a dramatic symbol of priorities shared by the philanthropist and the institution's leaders.

Related to these basic reasons for the prominence of the School of Religion in the plans of Few and J. B. Duke was the institution's historic ties with the Methodist church. Those ties had begun informally with the establishment of a modest, one-room school in Randolph County in 1838; they became formalized in the late 1850s when the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, adopted the school officially, and it changed its name to Trinity College.[6] The Methodist tie was not only crucial in the very survival of the college in the poverty-stricken decades of the late nineteenth century, but it was also the primary reason why Washington Duke and his family had become the institution's chief benefactors from about 1890 onwards.

No one worked harder or more successfully in maintaining those ties with Methodism than William P. Few. Yet a close and friendly bond had to go along with a certain distance too. By the time he became president of Trinity, the college had achieved what Few, as well as many other leading American educators, considered essential for a stable and secure college or university: a permanent and self-perpetuating board of trustees. Having learned from history as well as his personal experience in Trinity College's famed Bassett affair of 1903, Few balanced a genuine belief in democracy with a realistic awareness that, in one of his favorite phrases, periodic "gusts of unwisdom" were a characteristic and dangerous feature of democratic societies. "In the long run of years there can be no security for a college," Few avowed in 1908, "which in its actual control is too close to the untrained mass of people, whether this mass is represented by a state government subject to popular will or represented by a church organization that reflects too immediately the changing moods of the multitude." In words that echoed famous phrases of Abraham Lincoln, Few declared that to "believe in the future of America at all, or for that matter to contemplate human life with any degree of patience, one must believe that the people wish to do right and in the long run and in the main will do right; but this does not mean that they have the expert knowledge to manage a college any more than it means they are competent to argue a point of law before the Supreme Court of the United States, or to treat an acute case of pneumonia."[7]

Translated into practical terms, the formal or legal relationship that Trinity College had with Methodism came down to an arrangement concerning two thirds of the trustees, an arrangement that was continued without modification when the university was organized. As men-

tioned earlier, while the trustees of Trinity-Duke were in reality a self-perpetuating body of thirty-six persons, the names of one third of these were submitted for election, which in actual practice was confirmation, by the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The newer Western North Carolina Conference of the same church "elected" another third, and the alumni of the institution gave approval to the final third. In explaining the arrangement to an official of the Carnegie Foundation soon after the university was organized, Few noted proudly that none of the three confirming bodies had ever failed to ratify a person whom the university's trustees had nominated.[8] While Few was a lay Methodist (unlike his predecessor, John C. Kilgo, who became a bishop in 1910), he worked diligently all of his life on every level—local, district, conference, and general conference—of the Methodist church. He noted in 1938 that he had not missed a meeting of the annual conference for thirty years, and especially during the last two decades of his life informed observers acknowledged him as one of the most influential and dedicated laymen in the church. Such loyal service to Methodism also characterized Robert L. Flowers and numerous others associated with Few in Duke's top administrative echelon.

The tie with Methodism, more historic and more meaningful in human terms than the lofty grandeur of the chapel, anchored Duke University in the community and symbolized its overarching aim. Without religious tests prescribed in its charter or statutes for either faculty or students, Duke University, in Few's words, stood for "a conception of religion as comprehending the whole of life and of education as having to do with all the powers and capacities of our human nature." To bring the two together in the "generous service of humanity" was the great purpose and aim of the university.[9]

Such were the considerations that helped give, in Few's mind, a special emphasis to the School of Religion at Duke. There especially Few understandably expected to find strong allies in the struggle to maintain the desired relationship between education and religion, and while the school would be carefully ecumenical, it would be the most directly meaningful and practical link with Methodism. Trinity had received only relatively small amounts of money directly from the two Methodist conferences in the state, and those sums had gone towards the support of instruction in Bible. That pattern would continue, with money from the church, in small amounts at first and gradually growing larger, going to the School of Religion.

In organizing what was meant to be a major, national university around what had been essentially a North Carolina Methodist college, Few well knew that there would be difficulties aplenty. For one thing, the composition of both the student body and the faculty would gradually change,

with both becoming significantly larger and more religiously and geographically diverse than had been the case with Trinity. Speaking candidly of the new challenges facing Duke University, Few posed this question in 1925: "Is our constituency wise enough and good enough to produce a soil and atmosphere that will sustain a great university and one worthy of Mr. Duke's wonderful gift? Our people and their leaders must make answer in the great and eventful years that are just ahead of us."[10] The School of Religion would play a central role in helping Few a few years later to give a positive answer to the question he had posed.

A movement to strengthen religious instruction at Trinity had begun, in fact, several years before the university was organized. Eager to expand Trinity's religious work so that through academic or extension programs it might "reach directly to every nook and corner of the State," Few requested the two Methodist conferences in 1922 to underwrite two more faculty appointments in the Department of Religion. The conferences agreed to do so, and Few began speaking of Trinity's hopes for a School of Religion, one offering not only Bible studies but also church history, public speaking, and missionary training. That ambitious plan, however, like Few's abortive attempt to launch a medical school in conjunction with the University of North Carolina, never materialized.[11] The munificence of J. B. Duke finally allowed a number of Few's and Trinity's ambitious plans to start becoming realities after December, 1924.

Selection of the deans for Duke's new professional schools proved to be one of President Few's most important and challenging tasks. In terms of long tenure in the deanship, Few would not have the good fortune with the School of Religion that he had with the medical school. Yet in both cases he started the process by seeking advice from distinguished leaders in the respective fields. In the case of the School of Religion, Few invited the dean of Yale's divinity school, Charles Foster Kent, for a conference in Durham. Among other matters on which Kent offered advice, he suggested a man he considered of "unique promise and ability" and one who could prove to be, Kent believed, "one of the corner stones in the large work" being planned at Duke.[12] Although Few tried to pursue the suggestion, Professor Millar Burrows, Kent's nominee and a rising luminary in biblical scholarship, proved unavailable to come to Duke.

Few also turned to the executive secretary of the Association of American Colleges, Robert L. Kelly, for suggestions, since his work gave him a wide knowledge of academic life, and in addition he was a recognized authority on theological education in America. "We need men of size and men wise and good enough to make the best use of first rate opportunities, in the Law School, School of Religion, and in almost any subject," Few explained, "provided the man is really first class and might be available for us here."[13]

The initial suggestion of the person who was destined to become the first dean of the School of Religion apparently did not come from Kelly, however, but from James Cannon III, a future dean of the school himself. A graduate of Trinity in 1914, Cannon, after obtaining a master's degree at Princeton University and being ordained as a Methodist minister, had joined the Trinity faculty in 1919 as an assistant professor in biblical literature and missions. During the academic year of 1924–25, he was on leave while securing an advanced degree at the Princeton Theological Seminary. Edmund D. Soper, Cannon's nominee, was a professor of the history of religion in Northwestern University. A graduate of Dickinson College and Drew Theological Seminary, Soper was well known in his field as the author of two prominent books in comparative religion. Few, having learned that Soper was a good teacher as well as a thorough scholar, gained additional interest when Cannon, who had heard Soper in the pulpit, reported that his preaching was "constructive and stimulating, though not oratorical."[14] The fact that Soper was a Methodist, albeit of the northern variety, no doubt heightened his appeal, for Few and others at Trinity-Duke had long been outspoken, prominent supporters of the movement to reunify the Methodist church and end the sectional schism that had occurred before the Civil War. Another young faculty member in religion at Duke and also a Trinity alumnus, Hersey E. Spence, had urged Few to seek "a big man whose standing is unquestionable and of international reputation to head the school." Few clearly needed no such urging, for that was his oft-expressed view all along; but he probably did not agree with what Spence termed a further "sad observation" after a survey of the field in the South: "We shall have to turn to northern trained and northern born men for our new professors, especially for the head[s] of our departments," and as for the deanship especially, the sort of "first class man, trained in a university, that has a modern outlook" did not appear "to be in the Southern Methodist church."[15]

Knowing the academic side of Southern Methodism extremely well, Few apparently did not fully share Spence's gloomy assessment about regional possibilities. At any rate, while the question of the deanship remained unsettled, Few displayed his canny ability in spotting certain kinds of talent by recruiting for the School of Religion a remarkable young southerner, Bennett Harvie Branscomb. A graduate of Birmingham-Southern College with both a bachelor's and master's degree from Oxford University, Branscomb was a promising New Testament scholar. Destined also to be a future dean of the Duke school as well as a highly successful and significant chancellor of Vanderbilt University, Branscomb in 1925 was, of course, only at the beginning of his outstanding career. Few had tried in vain to bring him to Trinity two years earlier, and with the success in 1925 Few boasted to a prominent Methodist layman who had assisted

in the matter, W. R. Odell, that Duke had obtained "the best available man in the South for our department of religious training."[16] Branscomb himself seemed equally pleased, for he wrote Few that with Duke's "magnificent opportunity" and "the need throughout the South of the work that Duke can do," he felt "very distinctly to have found a vocation worthy of a lifetime."[17]

No doubt cheered by that success, Few pushed to land Soper. With growing national publicity about Tennessee's law banning the teaching of Darwinian evolution in the state's schools and a furore that would lead to the famed Scopes trial in July, 1925, Soper understandably worried about whether the affair "would affect the possibility of securing men from the north, even in North Carolina." He thought Tennessee had done "a very dangerous thing."[18]

Whatever fears Soper had about the repercussions from the fundamentalists' crusade must have been allayed when he visited Duke at Few's invitation in May, 1925. Having gotten additional information on Soper even before the visit, Few soon after it reported to Cannon that Soper had "made a fine impression on practically everybody" and it was clear "that we want him."[19] Soper, however, liked his position at Northwestern. Moreover, he worried about the multiple responsibilities that Few, at least initially, envisioned for the dean of the School of Religion: he would not only have the large chore of being the organizing and foundation-laying dean, but he would also be expected to serve as vice president in the Division of Student Life as well as being the university preacher. Soper protested that the combination of the three tasks might be possible during the first year or two, but the load would become crushing after "things got under way."[20]

No doubt recognizing the reasonableness of Soper's views, Few relented about one of the three tasks, that of being the university preacher, and declared that he would largely follow Soper's advice when a decision had to be made about that. And as for salary, Soper's career would certainly be put on "an even sounder financial basis" if he came to Duke.[21]

With Northwestern struggling to hold on to Soper, Few made a strong appeal. He argued that Soper would have a better opportunity at Duke "to promote religion through education in the coming twenty-five years" than at anywhere else in the world. "Where is there another institution," Few asked, "that has at once the resources, the purpose to give the Christian program a central place in education, that has a wide open field and the human material, and all this in a liberal atmosphere of Christian freedom and truth and in a section of the country that is growing rapidly, that is full of hope, and that has its face steadily toward the future?" Soper would have a place of leadership in a formative period, and if more mundane considerations needed to be weighed, Duke would provide a house as well

as a salary ($8,000) higher than Northwestern was paying. Since Duke aimed at cross-fertilization, Few argued, Soper could certainly keep his membership in the New York Methodist Conference.[22]

Soper accepted. Few, no doubt happy and relieved to have named the first of the deans for Duke's professional schools, expressed his delight at the prospect of having Soper "so intimately associated with me in that part of the work here which I have most at heart." The two of them, Few noted, would have to give a good part of the coming year to thinking through their problems. Meantime, Duke also needed a dean for its law school, and if Soper would confer with the law dean at Northwestern and then transmit suggestions, that would be appreciated.[23]

Even before Soper's acceptance, Few advised Branscomb, who wished information to pass on to possibly interested students, that Duke would certainly offer the master's degree in religious education in the 1925–26 academic year, as had been done in the previous year. Candidates for the bachelor of divinity degree should be encouraged to enroll, for Few felt sure that such a degree would be established within the next two years. He expected the School of Religion to be fairly well set up by September, 1925, and fully so by September of the following year.[24]

That Few and others at Duke rejoiced over Soper's acceptance of the deanship should occasion no surprise. That the *Christian Century*, one of the nation's leading religious journals, found the appointment hopeful and significant was a more important omen. "Tennessee is not all the South," the *Christian Century* commented, and neither had "the court at Dayton [for the Scopes trial] heard all there is to be said as to the cultural and religious future of that great part of the country." The best evidence for that, the magazine continued, was Soper's appointment at Duke. In the field of comparative religion, he occupied a position which would have been "repudiated with honor by practically all church bodies of half a century ago." Yet Soper's books revealed a "catholicity of spirit sufficient to recognize the genuine religious significance of all the ethnic faiths."

The *Christian Century* went on to explain that Soper had the promise of a free hand in building what was expected to be the most influential school of religion in the South, one that would train both ministers and scholars in religion. While serving as dean, he would also be a vice president in immediate charge of all the religious interests of the university. "It is an unusual organization for a school," the journal noted, "and gives the man chosen for the position an unusual opportunity." That a person of Soper's kind had been chosen "augurs well for the future religious life of the South."[25]

With Soper coming to Duke in September, 1925, he and Few generally proved able to work together reasonably well, as far as surviving records indicate. In fact, an historical problem arises from the fact that

frequent conferences between the two men eliminated the need for most written communications, and there is uncertainty as to the precise contribution each man made to the development of the School of Religion. On one basic matter concerning standards, the two men strongly agreed: the school would be strictly professional in that only college graduates would be accepted. This was not then the case with many theological schools in the nation and certainly not with most of them in the South. The significance of the standard is further heightened by consideration of the fact that a survey of Southern Methodist clergy in 1926 revealed that only 4 percent were graduates both of college and a theological seminary; 11 percent were college graduates; and over half (53 percent) had only a high school education or less. Peter Cartwright, the famed circuit-riding evangelist of the early nineteenth century, had boasted that uneducated Methodist itinerants had set America on fire religiously before educated ministers had been able to light their matches.[26] Overthrowing the vestiges of that tradition, perhaps once suited to a raw frontier society, was one of the chief purposes of Few, Soper, and Duke's School of Religion.

Soper, as part of the planning and recruiting process, traveled to confer with various leaders in theological education. A professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York, believing that there was too much individualism and compartmentalization in the work of the leading older seminaries, urged that Duke try to start its theological work as a "cooperative enterprise, each instructor being willing to be a part of a team." As for emphases, he counseled that whatever else Duke's school might do, its graduates "should know their Bible[s], know how really to use them." Both goals were, of course, more easily pronounced than accomplished, but Soper confessed to Few that his various conferences made him "feel more than ever the responsibility of getting the best men" for the school. "We must be able to win the respect of those who are watching theological education," he urged, "—and men are the most important element."[27]

Soper also had ideas about the physical facilities that were yet to be built for the school. Construction of them on Duke's new West campus would not begin until 1927. Soper began early, however, to push for certain features in the building that would eventually house the School of Religion. He pled for a sufficient number of offices for the faculty, something perhaps taken for granted in a later and more opulent era but hard to come by in earlier decades. And he particularly desired that there should be in the school's building a small chapel seating from 250 to 500 people. "We must have such a place," he maintained, "a place that is churchly, for many things connected with teaching homiletics and the conduct of worship, as well as a quiet place for the meditation and quiet meetings we must frequently hold."[28]

Few, wrestling with an unending series of problems, may have forgotten

Soper's plea for a small chapel or may have thought that the planned proximity of the School of Religion to the great university chapel that was to be built obviated the necessity of a smaller, separate chapel. At any rate, as the planning of the Tudor Gothic buildings for the West campus proceeded, Soper became seriously disturbed at one point and, after a conference with Few in the spring of 1926, wrote him a letter explaining that their views might be so far apart as to make it difficult for them to cooperate further in making the School of Religion what it ought to be.

Soper avowed that he had two prime convictions concerning the place of the school in the life of Duke: "One is that it must be an integral part of the life of the University, socially, and intellectually, as well as religiously." Also, he believed that there had to be a certain unity within the School of Religion which would make possible certain results not possible otherwise, and above all, there had to be religious contacts between the persons in the school that would give it its characteristic atmosphere. In physical terms, Soper wanted in the building a room for a social center and, more important he said, a small chapel. The energetic chairman of the English department, Professor Frank C. Brown, was Few's chief liaison with the architects designing all the new buildings and with the building committee of the Duke Endowment that was supervising and paying all the costs. Brown, according to Soper, seemed to think that an assembly room or large classroom would suffice for the school's religious gatherings, but Soper, obviously aroused, insisted that his own idea was different. "It is to have a real Chapel," he explained again, "where at times the theological students might meet as a united body and there stimulate that sense of religious unity without which we might just as well not attempt to start a School of Religion at all."[29]

Soper got the chapel. When the new building—named for James A. Gray, an important trustee of Trinity College—that would house the School of Religion, along with various other occupants, was opened in 1930 it contained the small chapel for which Soper had battled. Named for Brantley York, the Methodist preacher who in the 1830s had served as the founding principal of the modest school that evolved into Duke University, the chapel would, as Soper predicted, play an important part in the life of the school.

Soper left his imprint on things that were more important than physical facilities. In an important memorandum in June, 1926, he spelled out for Few various important policies that needed to be settled and agreed upon before the formal opening of the school could be announced. Branscomb later recalled that he had worked closely with Soper in all of the planning for the school, so the memorandum probably reflected his thinking also.[30] At any rate, on the matter of admitting only college graduates, Few and Soper agreed, though the policy would certainly mean small enrollments

for an unknown period. On the matter of scholarships for students, Soper explained that in most theological seminaries students not only received free tuition but also paid no room rent; many seminaries also gave scholarships in a range from $100 to $200 per year and helped students to secure part-time work in nearby churches. Since queries were coming in, Soper noted that clear answers to questions about costs to the students had to be forthcoming.

Here, on the matter of scholarships for theological students, Few had a brainstorm. Trinity College had long given, in effect, full tuition scholarships to pre-ministerial students. Now that Duke University was preparing to move to a higher level of theological training, it was Few, according to the later testimony of the second dean of the School of Religion, who hit on an imaginative way to solve the critical problem of student scholarships.[31] Despite widespread local and national publicity to the contrary, Duke University was actually hard pressed to find the money to do well all that Few had persuaded James B. Duke it should try to do; and the School of Religion, receiving virtually no income from tuition, would be costly enough even without the added burden of scholarships for students. Yet in the indenture creating the Duke Endowment, completely apart from special provision made for the university, J. B. Duke had stipulated that a certain percentage, 4 percent to be exact, of the annual income of the Endowment—a sum that would over the years grow progressively larger—should be used to "maintain and operate" rural churches of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in North Carolina.[32] Having been J. B. Duke's primary agent for aid to North Carolina Methodism, aid that began a decade or more before the Duke Endowment was created, Few was more knowledgeable and experienced in the matter than any one else. When confronted with the problem of scholarships for students in the School of Religion, he soon came up with the idea of summer apprenticeships for the students in North Carolina's rural Methodist churches, work that could be a valuable learning experience for the student and for which the Duke Endowment could pay; that pay, in turn, could cover the students' basic living expenses for the academic year. It was a plan destined to play a most important role in Duke's theological training.

If Few solved that particular problem, Soper probably deserves the credit for coming up with a solution to another difficult tangle that he described in his memorandum of June, 1926. To an extent that Few apparently had not contemplated, Soper believed that a sharp and clear demarcation had to be made between the School of Religion and the undergraduate work in Bible required of all students and in elective undergraduate courses in religion. In other words, it was Soper who argued for and won the organization of a separate faculty for the School of Religion just as in law and medicine. Declaring that decisions about the policies and personnel of the teaching staff were crucial in determining "the kind

of a school it is to be for decades if not for a century," Soper warned that unless care were taken "we might easily wreck our vessel in the very act of launching it."

Soper confessed that in dealing with personalities, "sensitive natures are to be found in the religious field as in all others." But human sensitivities and egos notwithstanding, there were realities about graduate-level theological education that had to be faced. Soper then noted that "the doctor's degree is not a *sine qua non* of success in doing work of the highest grade," and he conceded that exceptions might be made in special cases. (Presumably his own case was one such exception.) The fact remained that "the schools of religion in the United States which take front rank have faculties in which most of the faculty possess the [doctor of philosophy] degree." This meant, he believed, that at least two of the men already in religion at Duke, Hersey Spence and Jesse M. Ormond, should be utilized primarily in undergraduate teaching. Soper thought that James Cannon had the potential to develop into an effective graduate-level teacher in the field of missions and that Branscomb needed to be given the opportunity to complete the doctorate (which he did at Columbia University). Hiram E. Myers, a Trinity alumnus who had served as pastor of Duke Memorial Methodist Church in Durham, had been appointed to the Duke faculty in 1925 and given leave to do more graduate work at Boston University. Soper judged that while Myers would be clearly valuable in undergraduate courses, the question of his teaching in the School of Religion could best be left open.

Aside from Soper's responsibilities as vice president for student life, he had an apparently genuine interest in enriching Duke's undergraduate program in religion. He urged that, in addition to the courses in the Bible, there should be elective courses in religious education, missions, the Christian social program, and the history of religion. The School of Religion and the undergraduate department would, of course, have a close relationship and share a number of faculty members, but Soper convinced Few that formal, organizational separation of the two entities was the soundest procedure.

For the School of Religion itself, Soper's memorandum set forth a clear-cut plan. Historically there were, he suggested, five basal "chairs" or departments in most theological schools: (1) systematic theology or Christian doctrine; (2) New Testament literature and interpretation; (3) Old Testament literature and interpretation; (4) church history; and (5) practical theology and homiletics. To those fields of study various others were often added, but he thought the two most important were history of religion or comparative religion (his own field) and Christian missions. Those were the seven "chairs" that Soper believed should be filled before Duke announced the opening of its school.

Religious education could be organized separately, Soper noted, but he

thought it preferable to include it as an integral part of the school. Within that field, the three particular areas that he believed should be taught were the psychology of religion, methods in teaching religion, and the administration of religious education.[33]

Just how much of Soper's somewhat elaborate memorandum was a restatement of matters that he, Branscomb, and Few had agreed upon earlier and how much of it was novel to Few is not known. What is clear is that the first dean had described and given the rationale behind the essential pattern that the School of Religion would follow. Moreover, appointments to fill most of the important "chairs" that Soper had described were being made throughout 1925 and 1926.

Two important appointments, both of men destined to be future deans of the school, came in the spring of 1926. Elbert Russell, a Quaker with ancestral roots in North Carolina, received his doctoral degree at the University of Chicago after graduating from Earlham College. Teaching at Swarthmore when Soper interviewed him there, Russell had publications in the field of New Testament studies, and Soper, obviously much pleased by him, reported to Few that he believed Russell could fit splendidly into the Duke situation. After Russell's visit to the campus, he promptly accepted Few's invitation to teach in the general field of biblical interpretation.[34]

In the field of church history, Paul Neff Garber proved easy to find, for he was already a member of Duke's Department of History. A native Virginian, he graduated from Bridgewater College and then attended Crozer Theological Seminary before transferring to the University of Pennsylvania for a doctorate in American history. Born and raised in the Church of the Brethren, he had become a Methodist, one who perhaps displayed the alleged zeal of the convert, for he worked with unusual relish and productivity in the area of Methodist church history as well as in the operations of both the School of Religion and various church bodies.[35]

The appointment made in the field of Old Testament studies proved, in the long run, much more problematical than the others. Allen H. Godbey graduated from Morrisville College and then received his doctorate at the University of Chicago. Author of an impressive number of publications in a difficult, somewhat esoteric field, he was clearly an able, albeit idiosyncratic scholar, and he was named professor of Hebrew and Oriental languages in the School of Religion in the summer of 1926. Few received a number of unambiguous recommendations of Godbey, but one correspondent, after expressing satisfaction about Duke's interest in Godbey, noted, somewhat bluntly, that he was "a queer duck, but a very great scholar."[36] Elbert Russell, in his initial interview with Soper, had spoken favorably of Godbey, and for some time after the appointment Few and others seemed pleased about it. Few, in fact, wrote in 1927 to thank the

person who had first called attention to Godbey and added that he was "a bright, a learned, and an admirable man and it is a satisfaction to us all to have him here." Few thought that it was a sad reflection that in an organization like the Methodist church for a quarter of a century "so loyal and competent a man could not have been made use of."[37] Unfortunately for both Godbey and the School of Religion, the situation would drastically change for the worse within a very few years.

Ironically, the appointment that seemed to be the hardest to make also proved to be of short duration at Duke. In June, 1926, Soper advised a correspondent that for every name he and Few had suggested to them for other positions, they received at least five in religious education. Commenting that "it is easier to get a man than to get rid of him if he is not desirable," Soper went on to say: "We feel that there is much superficiality in this field [religious education] and what we are looking for is a man or men who not only have the technical training but who have religion, sound common sense and philosophical background."[38] Presumably Soper finally found a person meeting such expectations, for Howard M. LeSourd was named to the School of Religion's original faculty in the field of religious education. An undergraduate at Ohio Wesleyan who had also received a master's degree at Columbia, LeSourd was a graduate of Union Theological Seminary and was brought to Duke from his teaching post at Western Theological Seminary. In 1929 he would leave Duke for a position at Boston University.[39]

Not all of Few's and Soper's recruiting efforts were successful, of course, but one or two of their failed attempts are suggestive of the caliber of person being sought. Paul B. Kern, then dean of the theological school at Southern Methodist University, planned to leave that position in order to return to the preaching ministry. Few, undoubtedly with Soper's full concurrence, sought to bring Kern to Duke and enlisted the aid of the Methodist bishop E. D. Mouzon in the endeavor. "What we do in the next few years in setting up this institution will last as long as American civilization endures," Few declared, "and everybody who can help ought, I think, to be willing." Noting that Kern felt something of that pull towards Duke, Few admitted that Kern also felt drawn toward the pastorate. Could not Bishop Mouzon help work out an arrangement whereby Kern could both teach at Duke and take the pulpit of a Durham church?[40] Despite all of Few's arguments and efforts, he failed with Kern, who later became a Methodist bishop. Another person who was also destined to become a prominent Methodist bishop, Ivan Lee Holt, declined Duke's invitation in 1927 to teach in the School of Religion.[41]

Despite these rebuffs, a core faculty was on hand for the opening of the school in the fall of 1926: Branscomb, Cannon, Garber, Godbey, LeSourd, Russell, and Soper. There were others who taught part-time in the school,

and additional appointments would be made in due course; but Duke's first professional school opened its doors to eighteen full-time students, all college graduates, in September, 1926. Formal exercises marking the opening were held on November 9, 1926, the day before the meeting in Durham of the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist church. To begin the exercises, Ralph W. Sockman, a distinguished minister from New York, preached at a special morning service at Trinity Church, the oldest Methodist church in Durham, and a communion service followed. The planners of the occasion (Few and Soper) explained: "It seemed especially fitting that the spiritual note which is to characterize the life, not only of this School, but of all of Duke University, should be prominent in the first hours of the life of the new School."

Luncheon at the sparkling new Washington Duke Hotel in the center of downtown Durham followed and featured an illustrated lecture by Professor Frank C. Brown showing the plans for the future buildings of the university, including, for the first time, a slide showing the architect's drawing of the building to be occupied by the School of Religion. Visiting guests were then taken from the luncheon for a tour of the new campus and the proposed site of the building.

The formal opening of the school, held that afternoon in Duke Memorial Methodist Church, took a more academic tone. A robed procession preceded statements by Few and the chairman of Duke's trustees, Joseph G. Brown, and an address by Bishop Mouzon to which Soper responded. Again justifying the purely graduate orientation of the school, the planners declared that the day had come "when a minister must be able to interpret the age in which he lives to his congregation, and this cannot be done without far more preparation and study than have been necessary in the years that have gone by." A reception and dinner that evening at the Washington Duke Hotel, with brief remarks by visitors representing various theological schools and universities and colleges, closed the all-day affair.[42]

Having started with an appropriate flourish, the fledgling school grew steadily. By 1931 there were 133 men and ten women enrolled as candidates for the three-year bachelor of divinity degree. They came from 35 colleges and universities, with Duke heading the list with 60 students and Wofford College next with 8 students. Well over half of the students (83) still came from North Carolina, and while Methodists constituted the overwhelming majority (130), there were 13 students from other denominations and faiths, including 2 Baptists and 1 Jewish student.[43]

Starting with only five students in 1927, the summer program for ministerial students working in rural Methodist churches had grown to sixty-seven by 1931. Since it was for many years the only source of scholarship aid in the School of Religion, the program was obviously a crucial one;

J. M. Ormond, director of the school's rural life department, was in charge of the program. Mostly serving as assistants to regular pastors and directors of religious education, the theological students had few expenses while performing the summer work, since local churches furnished their room, board, and transportation. For their work, the university (which was in turn repaid by the Duke Endowment) advanced to each student $200 per semester to cover room, board, and other basic expenses during the school year.[44]

The work plunged students quickly and directly into challenging situations. In the summer of 1931 two students who were assigned to rural churches on the Goldsboro circuit in the eastern part of the state reported that they had conducted a twelve-day revival meeting with two preaching services daily and a Bible school for about fifty children every morning at 8:30. Encouraged by the "splendid crowds" at the small church, the students added that they had "visited in practically every home" and were pleased that "eighteen new members were brought into the church on profession of faith." They were proceeding next to open another revival meeting at another church on the same circuit.[45]

Reports of similar exertions were numerous, but there were also problems. Students fresh from their classrooms at Duke were not necessarily primed for functioning well in all circumstances, although in Ormond's noncredit practicum for the students in the program he tried to alert them to possible problems and pitfalls. Despite that, an experienced minister in the mountains of western North Carolina reported on his dealings with a summer assistant from Duke and declared that "when you are dealing with mountain people you are up against circumstances that are different from those to be found at any other place." The Duke student assigned to him, he declared, had argued with him since arriving, and though he had warned the student not to go "off on a tangent on the idea of Pacifism and the Racial question," the student had done exactly that in his evening sermon. When warned again, the student avowed that "unless he could preach [on] those two things that he could not preach."[46]

Few had spoken of Duke University's having a "duty of mediation" between the South's religious conservatism and the intellectual ferment of the era. No doubt Ormond, Garber, and other professors in the School of Religion had a more immediate, literal task of "mediation" between their students and older Methodists, lay as well as clerical, in the region. At any rate, the summer program, despite occasional problems, proved to be a valuable mainstay of the school's scholarship support as well as a pioneering experiment in training for work in rural churches.

As valuable as the program was, there were also troubling limitations to it. While North Carolina in that period remained one of the nation's most rural and agricultural states, cities and towns were growing rapidly too;

yet by the terms of J. B. Duke's indenture, assistance was barred to towns having more than 1,500 people. Garber, who was a zealous member of the Western North Carolina Conference and had numerous close friends among the Methodist ministers in many Piedmont cities and medium-sized towns, complained privately about the fact that Duke theological students could not be assigned there, for he believed the benefits to them would be even greater than from the rural work.[47]

The Duke Endowment scholarships were also available only to Methodists, and for a school that wished to be ecumenical in both faculty and student body, that restriction posed problems. One dean at a neighboring college advised that he could send additional, promising students to the school if aid were not limited to Methodists.[48] A few non-Methodist applicants to the school even proposed changing their denominational affiliation, but the School of Religion strongly discouraged such a step.[49] An additional limitation was that the summer program was open only to unmarried students on the grounds that the stipend paid was inadequate to support a family.[50] Theological students, like other graduate students in that depression-wracked era, were not as apt to be married as would become the case in later decades, but the restriction still affected some persons interested in becoming ministers. On the one hand, therefore, the opportunity for scholarship aid from the Duke Endowment proved to be a vital godsend to the young school. There were troubling limitations, however, and the leaders of the school would later move to ameliorate the situation.

E. D. Soper, however, hardly remained long enough as dean to have a part in solving later problems. Having played a crucial role in establishing and shaping the School of Religion, he resigned in 1928 to become the president of Ohio Wesleyan University. While the faculty of the School of Religion passed appropriate resolutions expressing appreciation for Soper's contributions and regret at his leaving, Few commented privately that Soper had been certain to go sooner or later since he was "a rolling stone" and had not, at any rate, "been altogether satisfactory on the inside."[51] Soper, in turn, had his own reservations about Duke's president, for he warned his successor as dean that one could "work *under* President Few but not *with* him."[52]

Regardless of Soper's assessment, Few may not have been altogether fair in his appraisal of Soper. While the challenge of a college presidency plus a larger salary may have been the chief attractions for Soper, the fact that Few had assigned him not one but two quite different tasks, both of them challenging and time-consuming, might have played a part in his decision to leave Duke. In addition to the deanship, Soper had, at Few's insistence, served as vice president for student life. While the double appointment aptly demonstrated Few's aspirations for the moral

tone and religious dimension of Duke University, it undoubtedly posed problems for Soper. The scope of the work was broad, for, as he had sketched it out in a memorandum to Few, Soper's task was nothing less than the promotion of the highest standard of living—physical, social, moral and religious—among the Duke students. Working with a prestigious committee that included, among others, Few, Dean Wannamaker, James DeHart (the director of physical training and football coach), and J. A. Speed (the college physician), Soper oversaw an ambitious program that was intended to have an impact upon undergraduate class work and examinations, athletic activities, social affairs, student organizations, and other facets of university life. He and his coworkers were pledged to promote "an outlook on the world and its problems which shall lead to the formation of plans [by the students] for a career which shall not only be honorable but which shall make a contribution to the good of society." Moreover, through all the work of the student life division "the voluntary principle is to be scrupulously adhered to."[53]

The whole plan, so admirable in many ways, exactly reflected President Few's thinking. Yet it was highly unusual, to say the least, to ask the dean responsible for leading in the establishment of what was intended to be a high-quality professional or graduate school of religion to expend such a large portion of his time and energies in carrying out the other task, one which had a significant but not exclusive undergraduate focus. The fact that Few, after Soper's departure, did not again attempt such a doubling up of duties also suggests that even he had learned that his original plan was probably not the best one.

Soper's successor as dean of the School of Religion, Elbert Russell, certainly never faced the double challenge that had confronted Soper. Russell, in fact, escaped a large portion of the administrative burden of the school itself, for at the same time he became dean, Paul Garber was named as registrar of the school and thereby shouldered responsibility for dealing with the students concerning their academic programs and various other concerns. Energetic and personable, Garber proved to be adept in the performance of his task and clearly relieved Russell of a great deal of work and responsibility. Russell later recalled, in fact, that he had not wanted to become dean, for he had no zeal for administrative work. When he tried to persuade Few of that fact, however, and urged that Branscomb be named dean, Few countered that he did not wish at that stage to sidetrack Branscomb from his promising scholarly career. Moreover, Few, personally proud of having had a Quaker grandmother, liked to emphasize that Methodists and Quakers had united to establish the university's forerunner, Union Institute, back in 1838, and he clearly liked the idea of a Quaker's becoming dean of Duke's School of Religion. Russell reluctantly assented.[54]

Even before Russell took over the deanship from Soper, other important additions were made to the school's faculty. Soper had been saddled with two difficult jobs and had persuaded Few that it would be impossible for him to serve also as the preacher to the university. Slated eventually to fill that spot, Franklin S. Hickman joined the faculty in 1927 as professor in the psychology of religion. He would later become also the school's first professor of preaching (or homiletics). Born in Indiana in 1886, Hickman worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad for a number of years before his ordination as a Methodist preacher in 1913. He then proceeded to obtain his formal education: an undergraduate degree from DePauw University, a theological degree from Boston University, and a doctorate from Northwestern in 1923. He taught at the Chicago Training School for Home and Foreign Missions from 1920 to 1924 and at Hamline University for one year before coming to Duke. When the Duke Chapel was opened on the West campus in 1932, Hickman was named as one of the two preachers to the university (Elbert Russell was the other), and from 1938 to 1948 Hickman served as the first dean of the chapel.

Another important addition to the faculty was made in 1928. Gilbert T. Rowe, after graduating from Trinity College in 1895, taught Greek for a year at Hendrix College before being ordained as a Methodist preacher. After serving in a number of churches, mostly in North Carolina, he became editor of the *North Carolina Christian Advocate* in 1920 and in the following year the book editor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and editor of the *Methodist Quarterly Review*. Clearly one of the intellectual leaders of Southern Methodism, Rowe possessed the rare combination of extensive pastoral experience, wide knowledge of the church and its headquarters office, and scholarly interests. Few and Soper, again enlisting the assistance of W. R. Odell, set out to recruit Rowe for the faculty of the School of Religion; in 1928, after considerable debate on Rowe's part as to where he could best serve in what he regarded as a most critical time for religion in the South, they succeeded in bringing him to Duke as the professor of Christian doctrine.[55] Not only would Rowe remain at Duke for many years, serving as acting dean of the school during Russell's absence on leave in 1933–34, but he proved also to be a valuable link between the school and the Methodist church. Popular as a speaker and teacher on campus as well as off, Rowe, according to one official in the Methodist church's headquarters, was "one of a small group of men who know the general situation in the [Methodist] church and who have the ability to interpret the Bible from a liberal point of view and yet with satisfaction to the Church." Another perspective on Rowe came from a former student who said, "I had rather hear him call the roll of the class than to listen to most preachers."[56]

If Rowe's appointment worked out well, that of Allen H. Godbey, who

had first been suggested by a person in the Methodist headquarters office, unfortunately did not. Apparently a prickly scholar in the Old Testament field, Godbey, according to Russell's guarded comment to a colleague at another university, had a "violent quarrel" with prevailing theories of literary criticism of the Old Testament and along with possessing "very decided views" was "somewhat disposed to believe that the newest and least conventional opinion is the right one."[57] Eccentricities and difficult personalities are, of course, not rare in academic life, but in Godbey's case the matter apparently reached extreme, even bizarre proportions. Believing himself unfairly treated and thwarted in his desires about his courses and teaching, he began at some point around 1930 publicly attacking and criticizing his colleagues in the School of Religion, and especially Few and Russell. By late 1931 the situation had become so troubling and demoralizing that Few, backed by the faculty of the school as well as by a special investigatory committee of the trustees, moved to suspend Godbey from his teaching duties while keeping him on full salary. After taking his regular sabbatical leave with pay in 1932–33, Godbey lost his position at Duke. "It is a rather sad necessity that led to this," Russell noted privately, "and I think under the circumstances the University has been very lenient."[58] To a recent alumnus of the school and former student of Godbey's, Russell explained further: "We tried very hard to get along in the hope that he could stay with us until the retiring age . . . but his trouble developed so rapidly that it became intolerable. I realize that his attitude put many of his students in a rather difficult situation before it became clear that he was a mentally sick man. I want to assure you that I never let his attitude interfere with my friendship for him and efforts to help him."[59]

Branscomb, on leave in Germany for the year, informed Russell that students had reported their resentment of Godbey's classroom attacks on Russell. "I think your attitude toward him throughout your administration has done as much to win for you the affection of the student body as any other thing," Branscomb declared. "And I might also add the faculty in that statement."[60] Godbey attempted to publicize his grievances and to write quite long, elaborate, and accusatory memoranda to Few and various others. While the whole episode was painful for all parties involved and caused embarrassment to Duke and especially the School of Religion, it proved to be transitory.

No doubt partly because of the Godbey affair, the school moved with great deliberation in making its next appointment in the Old Testament field, but what turned out to be a fortunate appointment, originally in religious education, was made in 1931. Few and Soper apparently first encountered the name of Hilarie Shelton Smith in 1926 when trying to assemble the original faculty for the school.[61] Trying in vain to obtain

another person for religious education, they then settled on a friend of Soper's, Howard H. LeSourd, who, as mentioned earlier, left Duke soon after Soper did. Early in 1930, J. Q. Schisler, a prominent Methodist official to whom Russell and Few had turned for advice, wrote that Shelton Smith was "perhaps the best man in sight for your purpose." A native North Carolinian and graduate of Elon College, Smith had served as an Army chaplain in World War I and then obtained his doctorate at Yale. After a stint with the International Council of Religious Education, he had taught at Union Theological Seminary in New York but reportedly had found "the chilled atmosphere in that institution so out of harmony with his own Christian viewpoint that he did not find it pleasant." Brought back to teach at Yale, Smith, according to Schisler, possessed "those qualities which will enable him to grow with your institution"—if he could be moved from Yale.[62]

Encouraged by such letters, Russell and Few brought Smith to Duke for an interview in May, 1931, and soon afterwards offered him the job. Although Yale tried to keep him and he said he had found his situation there "delightful," Smith graciously explained that Duke had impressed him as having a great future. Furthermore, the job appealed to him, he added, "as being an opportunity to render a bit of service to the section of the country that I love."[63] Later shifting the focus of his teaching and research interests from religious education to the history of American Christianity and religious thought, Smith was destined to play a leading role in the strengthening of the scholarly dimension of Duke's religious studies.

Another appointment made in 1931, while originally meant to be temporary, also turned out to have a long-lasting impact. With Branscomb away on leave, Russell, working closely with Few, sought a one-year replacement in the New Testament field. Although Few was then "chary of Chicago theology," according to Russell, the dean held out for and finally won the appointment of young Kenneth W. Clark.[64] A native New Yorker, Clark graduated from Yale before obtaining his theological degree from Colgate-Rochester Divinity School and his doctorate from the University of Chicago. Clark proved to be an able teacher and energetic scholar, and his appointment was extended for a second and then a third year when Branscomb returned only to take on half-time duty as Duke's director of libraries. When the depression's grim consequences hit Duke, belatedly but seriously, in 1933–34, Russell had the unhappy task of first talking with Clark and then notifying him formally in June, 1933, that due to the "exigencies of preserving the departmental balance" in the School of Religion, Clark's appointment would terminate at the end of the next academic year.[65]

Happy at Duke and facing an academic job market woefully shrunken

by the depression, Clark appealed directly to Few. After coming as a one-year substitute for Branscomb in 1931, Clark noted, he had been asked to remain for a second and then a third year, with the suggestion (or hope?) expressed by Russell in the spring of 1933 that the third appointment was "more permanent" than in the first two years. Clark accordingly brought his furniture down from Rochester, New York, only to be told by Russell, who was no doubt pushed by Few in the matter, that the appointment would have to end in 1934. Rather than harping on that aspect, however, Clark emphasized his contributions to the school through his teaching, which Branscomb endorsed; through his scholarly work, which was in its early stages but certainly promising; and through his service to the Duke community as well as the larger community, which included a large amount of speaking to a number of Baptist and other groups.[66]

Fortunately for Duke and its School of Religion, Few relented and Kenneth Clark did not become a victim of the depression. Neither did the young ministers who graduated from the school in growing numbers in the 1930s, for they at least found employment. The South in which most of them found their first appointment, however, was indeed a poverty-stricken region, quite different from the relatively prosperous Sun Belt of the late twentieth century. Not all of Duke's new bachelors of divinity went to stricken rural churches, of course, but many of them did—and wrote back giving glimpses of their work. One young alumnus in rural Louisiana reported that he was "literally an itinerant Methodist preacher." His first appointment had been to a circuit with four churches, but after a few months he gained a promotion to a federated church of four different denominations that paid $1,800 a year. "There are also many Jews in the town and they contribute to the support of the church, and often attend the services," he stated. "The spirit of cooperation is fine, and I find no trouble in 'Being all things to all men.'"[67] Exactly how the Duke mentors felt about such supreme adaptability on the part of their students is not known, but Garber shared the letter with his colleagues and Few.

A Duke product serving in the remoter, mountainous regions of western North Carolina, "where revivals are attended but culture unknown," informed Garber that his book, *The Romance of American Methodism*, had been a great inspiration. "When I'd see such unthinkable conditions prevailing," the fledgling minister explained, "I'd think about the pioneers that had worse conditions than I, so I really enjoyed my work."[68] Another beginning minister in a small eastern North Carolina town wrote that he hoped he could fulfill Garber's expectations, but "if my work is to be judged by the amount of money the charge gives, I am afraid I will fall short of your expectations."[69] From an isolated section of Kentucky, a young alumnus, receiving around $400 a year on a four-church charge, reported that he had had no trouble getting into the conference because

he was the only candidate with the bachelor of divinity degree. But there were perhaps unexpected challenges: "Dr. Garber, we are going to show the Ky. Annual Conference that a Duke student will Go Any Where. We will also show them that we are Christ-like. Yesterday I had to stop twice during my sermon and pray, because of the disturbance." Since he said he had found the local people not in the habit of attending church, the enterprising young minister was emphasizing pastoral visiting, writing for the county newspaper, and utilizing the Parent-Teacher Association. Inviting Garber to come ride the circuit with him, he promised that there were "plenty of horses, the roads are rough and get slick with mud, but not slick for horseback riding."[70]

A similar story of spartan circumstances came from Mississippi, where an alumnus reported that his four churches were far apart and located on unimproved mud roads. Since people had been generous about bringing in gifts of food, the annual salary of $585, plus a $50 supplement from the Methodist mission board, stretched fairly far. The biggest expense had been a secondhand Ford coupe costing $225. Offsetting that expense, however, haircuts in the village cost only 15 cents. Though the parsonage had neither electricity nor running water, the young minister assured Garber that he was "very happy" and enjoying life to the fullest.[71]

Not all of the letters that came back from the alumni focused on physical circumstances. One new preacher in western North Carolina assured Garber that the most important part of his work, "next to the reverential part of it, has been the desire to make you never regret that you recommended me for the place here." Then he recounted a story that must have inspired understanding smiles in the School of Religion. Confronted with his first wedding and it a double one, the alumnus became rattled in reading the names on the licenses and tried to marry an absent mother to one of the grooms until the bride intervened (gently, one hopes) to straighten out the matter. "In spite of it all, they were well married," the minister concluded, "but the strain on my nervous system was dreadful for a week afterwards."[72]

Just as Duke's beginning ministers faced unforeseen mishaps and various economic hardships, students wishing to enter the School of Religion encountered formidable obstacles as a result of the great depression. No sociological data on the early students or their family backgrounds are available, but most of them probably came from quite modest circumstances. At a somewhat later date, Harvie Branscomb made an interesting observation about the theological students that was probably quite valid for the earlier students as well. "The ministerial student group on the whole is probably superior in character and purpose and, perhaps, equal in native ability to other professional groups," he noted, "but decidedly more limited in social background and worldly experience." Thus the

school faced the double responsibility, according to Branscomb, of selecting only strong candidates for the ministry and planning their training "so as to overcome as much as possible deficiencies in social experience, cultural knowledge, and above all, good judgment."[73]

Regardless of the students' socioeconomic backgrounds, there is good evidence that many of them, especially in the 1930s, had to scramble quite a bit to attend the School of Religion. One determined entrant from Oklahoma wrote that he was bound to come to Duke even if he had to hitchhike, for he had run short of money. On second thought, he believed he could cover his transportation to Durham but would not have any money when he got there.[74] Young Kenneth Goodson, a future bishop, was unable to have his transcript from Catawba College sent to Duke because he still owed money to Catawba. The college agreed, however, to send his diploma to Duke, thus allowing him to begin his theological training. "Then I have made arrangements to pay them ten dollars a month until the bill is paid . . . ," Goodson explained, and when that was accomplished they would forward the transcript. "It would certainly be a relief to me if I could find work after I get to school," he declared.[75]

Garber and, no doubt, some of his colleagues exerted themselves to find part-time jobs for the students. Since only a limited number of scholarships were available from the summer program of the Duke Endowment, many students served as assistant or part-time pastors for churches in the Durham area and further away. The students also lined up for part-time jobs in the library of the School of Religion and elsewhere on campus. Garber's prompt response to young Goodson was typical of many such letters he wrote: "I assure you that I will be glad to help you secure outside employment if I can possibly do so."[76]

Theological students had much more to cope with, however, than their financial circumstances. The school required for the bachelor of divinity degree, in addition to the three years of demanding course work, the completion and satisfactory oral defense of a full-fledged thesis. That it was a demanding requirement is shown by the report in 1936 that thirty-two former students in the school had completed all requirements for the degree except the thesis; approximately half of the thirty-two were said to be writing their theses in absentia, for which special permission was required.[77] Garber supplied further evidence about the faculty's standards for the thesis when he wrote in 1936 that two students had failed on their theses and that "a new day seems to be dawning for us in that more respect is being given in the preparation of good theses."[78]

The pendulum may have swung too far in the direction of "respect" for the thesis. By 1938 the faculty had restudied the matter and concluded that because the thesis had come to occupy a place in the curriculum out of proportion to that intended by the faculty, it "should be strictly

limited in scope and bulk." Except in unusual and especially approved cases, theses were to be limited to 100 to 125 pages in length. The faculty had also considered a comprehensive examination but after long study postponed the matter indefinitely.[79] An interesting defense of the thesis, which a majority of the school's alumni endorsed in a poll, came from Elbert Russell. He favored it, he later explained, not as an exercise in original research comparable to a doctoral dissertation but as training in the investigation of a subject and the clear, logical presentation of one's findings. "Preachers are not like lawyers who have a trained opponent to force them to be accurate and informed," Russell declared. "There is a temptation for preachers to be content with slipshod thinking and careless statements, because of lack of [research] facilities for information and keen and competent criticism."[80] Despite these defenses of the thesis, it would gradually be eliminated after World War II.

While the School of Religion clearly struggled to balance the spiritual, practical, and scholarly elements in ministerial training, the more purely scholarly dimension of the school gained an important impetus in the late 1930s. As articulated by Few and Soper from the beginning, the university's purpose was to train both ministers and advanced scholars in religion. A program for the training of the latter group proved a bit elusive and perhaps difficult to work out. The school at first tried a plan in cooperation with the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences whereby candidates for the degree of bachelor of divinity might also receive a master of arts degree without taking additional courses. That approach, which confused the ministerial or pastoral aspect of the divinity degree with the scholarly nature of the master's, proved unsatisfactory and was abandoned in 1933.[81]

Encouraged by President Few, Shelton Smith set his mind to the problem of graduate study in religion and headed a committee to devise plans. In a memorandum in 1936 Smith argued that the South needed at least one university in which students of "exceptional ability could engage in scholarly study of religion beyond that afforded in the regular B.D. curriculum of a divinity school." It would require, in addition to a strong faculty in the divinity school, library resources, "an undenominational atmosphere," and a well-established graduate school offering a wide range of courses of cognate value for students in religion. "Duke University alone in the South affords all of these advantages," Smith concluded. President Few hardly needed persuading along those lines and, with approval of the trustees, named Smith as director of graduate studies in religion, a post exactly like those in other arts and sciences departments that offered advanced degrees through the graduate school. It made for a somewhat complicated administrative structure in the area of religious studies at Duke—with a School of Religion, a distinct but related undergraduate

Department of Religion, and a separate but also related or overlapping Graduate Department of Religion. Nevertheless, the scheme worked.

Awarding the first three doctorates in religion in 1939, Duke University by 1947 had awarded a total of sixty-one masters of arts degrees (to forty-five men and sixteen women) and seventeen doctoral degrees (all men). Smith reported that the latter group was well placed, mostly in academic positions. Over three hundred students from twenty-nine different states and eight foreign countries had been enrolled in the graduate school for either a major or minor in religion.[82]

President Few, of course, took great pleasure and pride in the development and suggested to one correspondent that Duke, at that time, was the only university affiliated with American Methodism that provided for advanced studies in religion beyond the bachelor of divinity degree. "Duke is one of the important graduate religious centers," he asserted, "and it will, I predict, be better and better understood that we are now all in all as well equipped for this kind of work as any other university in the country."[83] Few insisted that this second, scholarly function of the faculty in religion was as important as the training of ministers. "No doubt we need great preachers," he argued, "but in the conflict with the paganism of our time, as in the conflict with the pagans of an older time, we must not only 'outlive and outdie' them but we must 'outthink' them."[84]

Developments in two areas were particularly important for the graduate aspect of religious study at Duke, the library and the faculty. Attention to library resources had long been a hallmark of the academic endeavor at Trinity College even before the university was organized. Early in the century, President John C. Kilgo, clearly influenced by the young Ph.D.'s on his faculty, had declared that the library was "the one department that measures the future development of the College."[85] After the organization of the university that tradition gained even greater emphasis, and many members of the faculty in the School of Religion played significant roles in building the library's resources. By 1936 Branscomb reported that as Duke's general library took its place as one of the half dozen most rapidly growing libraries in the nation, the library of the School of Religion was growing right along with it. With an estimated 35,000 volumes, it had developed special strength in the records of Methodism, thanks largely to Paul Garber's indefatigable labor in that field; there was also one of the most complete collections in America of the diocesan records of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and there were special strengths in literature for the study of the New Testament, in comparative religion, and in literature on the rural church. Highlighting some recent acquisitions of special interest, Branscomb noted a complete file of the Palestine Exploration Society; *Journals of the Royal Asiatic Society* for the Malay and Straits Settlement Branches and the Korean Branch, resources prized by

James Cannon in his field of missions; and a rare set of the *Magdeburg Centuries*, a work which he described as begun in 1559 and one of the fountainheads of much of the rewriting of the history of the Christian church in the first fifteen centuries.[86] In the Trinity-Duke tradition, the library of the School of Religion, not content with a mere regional comparison that would place it first in the South, would long continue a policy of aggressive development.

Important new appointments to the faculty, as well as library growth, helped in the graduate program. Using part-time or temporary teachers to cover some of the courses that Godbey had taught, Russell and his colleagues proceeded slowly and carefully in their search of a person in the Old Testament field. After extensive canvassing and one or two campus visits by possible candidates in 1935, Russell stated that Duke was trying to find someone who, in addition to the usual scholarly qualifications, had gained first-hand experience in Palestinian archeology. Such a person was difficult enough to find, he added, and since rather few students were attracted to Old Testament studies, and especially Hebrew, Duke hoped to find a person "who would add the weight of personal charm to the attractions of his field."[87]

One whose name cropped up early in the search, William F. Stinespring, was out of the country at the time (1934); in fact, he was obtaining exactly the type of first-hand experience in Palestinian archeology that Russell and his colleagues at Duke desired. A native of Virginia who graduated from the University of Virginia, Stinespring had, while also obtaining a master's degree there, taught Greek and biblical literature at his alma mater for several years before receiving his doctorate from Yale in 1932. A fellowship enabled him to spend four years at the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem before taking a job at Smith College in 1935. Described as "a coming man" by one referee, Stinespring was endorsed by one of his teachers at Yale as one who possessed a "genuine philological talent," as suggested by his having offered Hebrew, Syriac, Aramaic, North Semitic epigraphy, and Arabic in his final examinations at Yale. Characterized as a "likeable chap" who was neither suave nor mild-mannered, he was said to be "legitimately assertive, self-reliant and forthright," one who was not so much philosophic but "more interested in facts and results than in ultimate causes."[88]

Impressed by Stinespring's promise as a scholar and by his rich experience in the field, Russell, who had met and liked him while visiting in Jerusalem, had one misgiving or doubt: while there was no question about Stinespring's exceptional competence in linguistics, history, and archeology, would he have "a sympathetic interest in church work or in the religious side of Old Testament study"? The faculty of the School of Religion, Russell explained to one referee, was "quite liberal in accepting

the methods and general conclusions of a modern historical and critical study," but it also taught "a positive Christian faith and experience."[89] Unable to offer evidence about Stinespring's religious belief, the referee suggested that Duke invite Stinespring to come for a year as a visiting professor and "vet" him during that time. "He is such an honest man and so incapable of hypocrisy," this referee declared, "that there would be no trouble getting a clear idea of his adaptability to your requirements."[90] Russell, acting promptly on this advice, invited Stinespring to come as a visiting professor in the fall of 1936, which invitation he quickly accepted. No doubt his letter accepting the invitation somewhat reassured Russell and his colleagues, for Stinespring, after listing the courses he taught at Smith, stated that he did not much care what he taught "so long as it has something to do with Bible—a book which thrills me as a source of personal power, and as a cultural phenomenon of the greatest significance."[91] More important in the long run than such a letter, the opportunity to "vet" the Old Testament visitor during 1936–37 furnished ample evidence that he was indeed the type of scholar and person who filled the varied needs of the School of Religion, and Stinespring would remain at Duke for the remainder of his career.

Another young scholar who came to Duke in 1937, Ray C. Petry, also proved to be a long-term asset. A graduate of Manchester College with his doctorate in early church history from the University of Chicago (1932), he taught at Macpherson College, which was affiliated with the Church of the Brethren, for four years before coming to Duke. Russell reported a few years later that Petry had promptly won the respect of students and colleagues by his "fine personal spirit, his scholarly standards and ability as a lecturer." One insight into Petry's thoroughness, Russell suggested, was provided by the fact that when a group of divinity students from Texas and Louisiana purchased a secondhand car for their travels to and from home, they christened it the "Petry" because they expected it to cover a lot of ground. In his research and writing, Petry, having completed a book-length manuscript on Saint Francis of Assisi by 1940, was at work on a book on the "Ideal of the Christian Community in the Middle Ages" and well on his way to recognition as a distinguished scholar in his field.[92]

Joining the faculty a year after Petry, Albert C. Outler taught theology at Duke from 1938 until his resignation in 1945. A native Georgian who graduated from Wofford College before receiving his divinity degree from Emory, Outler received his doctorate from Yale the same year he came to Duke. He returned to Yale from Duke and in 1951 began a long, noteworthy career at Southern Methodist University.

Additional faculty strength for the School of Religion came from other departments at Duke, for as a relatively young university, professional schools and departments were not, perhaps, as rigidly compartmentalized

as was the case at many of the older institutions. Several professors in Duke's Department of Sociology—Charles A. Ellwood, Howard Jensen, and Hornell Hart—taught courses in the School of Religion. Ellwood, the first chairman of sociology at Duke, declared that his department felt "a greater interest in training students in the School of Religion to appreciate the problems of their human world than any other class of students in Duke University, for our aim is to train and adequately equip spiritual leaders for our civilization."[93] From the Department of Philosophy, Alban G. Widgery taught a course in the philosophy of religion, and Homer H. Dubs, a specialist in East Asian religion and thought, one in the history of religion and missions. Although Duke's medical school did not at first have the resources to include a Department of Psychiatry, after such an addition had become possible, the head of the department, Robert S. Lyman, offered a course that was especially adapted to the needs of divinity students. Filling another type of need, a member of the English department, A. T. West, taught a course in public speaking that was required for all candidates for the bachelor of divinity degree.[94]

Thus by building up its own faculty while also drawing on other resources in the university, the School of Religion achieved greater strength in the mid- and late 1930s. One conspicuous asset of the school was an unusually loyal and ever growing body of alumni. While no doubt less able than the graduates of other professional schools to contribute monetarily to the university, the divinity alumni showed a strong, continuing interest in and support of both the school and the university. Forming their own alumni association in 1934, the alumni finally obtained in 1936 something that they had been urging for several years: a quarterly publication from the School of Religion that would have as its primary objective, according to the faculty's statement, the continuation "with our alumni and others interested, the educational processes which are the concern of the School of Religion."[95] With James Cannon III as managing editor, the *Duke School of Religion Bulletin* immediately became a valuable addition. Various faculty members in the school presented articles dealing with their own research or with significant developments in their fields, and there were brief reviews of new books that could be recommended "as being likely to prove of special value to ministers and others particularly interested in religious questions."[96] News about the school itself and the activities of its current students also appeared in each issue.

Various publications by the theological students themselves would not be as long-lasting as the *Duke School of Religion Bulletin*, but one student-published quarterly, *Christian Horizons*, did continue from 1938 until shortly after World War II. Claiming to be the only journal published by seminary students when it began, *Christian Horizons* reflected a lively intellectual and spiritual ferment. Long before most other students, in the

North or South, began to be concerned about then prevailing racial arrangements, an editorial on "Jim Crow" in 1938 concluded: "If Christian social ideals are to be advanced substantially in the South, they will be advanced by both colored and white people working not independently of each other, but together. Southern students are placed providentially in a position whereby they, personally, may have an enormous part in bringing about interracial justice and cooperation."[97]

Data based on questionnaires submitted to the students by the staff of *Christian Horizons* afford an even more direct insight into prevailing ideas. Concerning theology, students claimed that the "crisis theology" of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, two leading European theologians, greatly assisted them in formulating their own positions and that it grew in influence as they progressed in their studies. Approximately three fourths of the students (78 percent) favored admission of Negroes to the School of Religion, and almost all favored a more interdenominational student body. In world affairs, and the poll was apparently taken early in 1940 before the fall of France in June of that year, 35 percent of the students professed to be, like Elbert Russell, "absolute pacifists," and only 5 percent then favored United States intervention in World War II even if "it becomes evident that England and France are being defeated in the European conflict." Reflecting the lingering impact of the depression and certain aspects of the New Deal, over three fourths of the students believed that consumers' and producers' cooperatives might help in the South's economic recovery, and 68 percent agreed, with some reservations, to government ownership of major public utilities.[98] Fast-changing world events in 1940 and 1941 would no doubt help modify at least some of the ideas of Duke's divinity students, just as happened with the great majority of other Americans in that era. But the students at least appeared to be ready to challenge various aspects of the status quo.

Students and faculty may have held certain views that often differed from those that predominated in the surrounding community and region, but both groups also tried in various ways to be of service to the larger society. Aside from the part-time preaching and other types of church work that many of the students performed, various groups among them, at different times, conducted services in the Duke Hospital and in the Durham County jail. They cooperated with the Duke Legal Aid Clinic, and several students worked in a social and recreational center in a run-down section of East Durham.[99]

The faculty's outreach or public-service activities took a different form from that of the students, but they too were conspicuously active in the local and larger community. Few, and through him the deans and departmental chairmen, strongly encouraged faculty members to have as much contact with the public as possible. Given the economic circumstances

of the times, honoraria were usually not involved, and even if they were offered, faculty members often declined to accept them. Aside from frequent stints at guest preaching, faculty members in the School of Religion were, perhaps understandably in light of their profession and the role of their alumni, more in demand as high school and college commencement speakers than any other group at Duke.

In addition to such individual contributions, the faculty participated in a number of more organized, service-oriented efforts. Carrying on a tradition that came from the Trinity College era, Duke University and particularly the School of Religion hosted each summer a Pastors' School for North Carolina's Methodist preachers. An official in the church's head office declared to Few in 1929 that the arrangements at Duke were better than he had seen elsewhere and that the "spirit of the North Carolina Pastors' School is as good as any in which I have served and that is due in no small measure to the school atmosphere that is created by holding the school in the buildings of the university."[100] Elbert Russell, inviting a prominent northern Quaker to lecture in the Pastors' School, made an interesting observation about the participants: "Thee would find the ministers very open minded, liberal and responsive. It is a delight to work with them. I had no idea before coming [to Duke] that any southern church had made as great progress as I have found here."[101]

The summer school that the School of Religion ran for a number of years at Lake Junaluska in the North Carolina mountains represented another type of outreach. Duke University began a summer session at Junaluska, a well-known Methodist conference center, in order to make it easier for teachers in the public schools in the mountain area to attend. When the School of Religion joined forces with the General Sunday School Board of the Methodist church to offer a six-week summer term there beginning in 1928, they targeted a different group. Both graduate courses and undergraduate courses were offered, with the former being under the jurisdiction of the School of Religion.[102]

A Pennsylvania schoolteacher looking for an inexpensive summer sojourn in other parts attended the School of Religion's session at Junaluska in 1932 and published a colorful account of her experiences. The setting, with its "blue, blue lake hidden away among clustering mountains," she considered "one of the most beautiful spots" she had ever seen. The absence of trolleys, movies, radios, shops and other diversions added to the quiet serenity of the place; and the nominal tuition of $5 per course was also appealing. With five professors and only thirty-five students, there obviously was much opportunity for interaction, and the Pennsylvanian gave an enthusiastic report about her classes. Nine of the ten ministers in one class, she observed, came from poor churches that paid little or no salaries. "To them the summer school was a time of refreshing for body

and soul," she added, "and to me a glimpse of how the other half of the world lives." The shortage of money was not matched by any shortage of food, however, for she reported that the tables in the "huge barn-like" Terrace Hotel "groaned with good things and there never was any lack, [for] great dishes piled up, were emptied and filled again and again."[103]

Durham's topography and summer climate could not compete, of course, with Junaluska's, but much of the faculty's service-oriented activity took place on Duke's main campus. A good example came in the fall of 1932 when Franklin S. Hickman invited ministers of all denominations in Durham and the surrounding area to meet at Duke. Some fifty or so ministers representing nine denominations attended a luncheon given by the university and then a lecture by Hickman with discussion following. Out of this grew an informal organization that, inspired by a famous New England preacher of the nineteenth century, took as its name the Phillips Brooks Club. Led by Hickman, it would meet monthly, with an interruption forced by travel restrictions during World War II, for two decades until his retirement in 1953.[104] Both students and faculty members engaged in many other types of service-oriented activities, and they changed somewhat with changing conditions, as, for example, during World War II.

Some months before the United States entered that war in late 1941, two significant developments occurred in the School of Religion: it acquired a new name and a new dean. The name change occurred primarily because President Few began pondering the matter at some point in 1939, possibly when many leading American educators visited Duke in the spring of 1939 for the capstone event in the year-long celebration of the centennial of the institution's founding. Receiving a letter somewhat later from a distinguished leader in theological education who defended "School of Religion" as the appropriate name, Few summoned Shelton Smith to his office to discuss the matter. Smith, firmly disagreeing with the writer, argued that "School of Religion" was "too indefinite a name to indicate the specialized function of a school designed to prepare men and women for the various types of ministry in the Christian communions." Furthermore, Smith continued, since "School of Religion" in some institutions was used to embrace undergraduate and pre-professional work as well as ministerial training, it was confusing to give the same name to a school such as Duke's that was focused solely on the graduate and professional level. Smith expressed his personal regret that Duke's school did not have the "more precise and significant name" of Divinity School, as was the case at Harvard, Yale, and certain other leading universities.[105]

Smith later recalled that President Few listened thoughtfully but expressed no immediate judgment on the matter. On several occasions thereafter, however, Few publicly used the term "Divinity School" when

referring to the School of Religion, and before he died in October, 1940, he told Vice President Flowers that he had decided to seek a change in the school's name. Feeling bound by Few's wishes, Flowers, soon after becoming president, arranged for the faculty in the school to be informed of Few's thinking and to be consulted about the matter. When all of the faculty members except one (who was not identified) expressed approval of the change, Flowers gained permission from the executive committee of the board to announce in May, 1941, that the School of Religion would henceforth be known as the Divinity School.[106]

Announcement of the new dean accompanied that of the new name. Elbert Russell, dean since 1928, apparently informed Few in the spring of 1939 that the time was fast approaching for his retirement. With Paul Garber being sought by various colleges to become their president, Few and Russell moved successfully to hold him at Duke by indicating that he would, in the not too distant future, be named as Russell's successor as dean. Accordingly, when Russell submitted his resignation the trustees elected Garber to the post in January, 1941, and announced the appointment publicly in May.[107]

An energetic and apparently effective administrator in the school as its registrar from 1928 on, Garber achieved particular prominence in 1938–39 in connection with the reunification of the nation's Methodist churches. A leading proponent of reunification, as were Few and others at Duke, Garber first published in pamphlet form an historical and legal study that answered in detail the claims made by one of the leading southern foes of unification, Bishop Collins Denny, Jr., of Virginia. "I have been spending more time in the Duke University Law Library than I have in the School of Religion Library," Garber reported to one ally, "endeavoring to make an examination of every legal case dealing with ecclesiastical matters."[108] With a copy of the pamphlet sent beforehand to each delegate to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which met later in 1938, Garber was pleased when the judicial council of the church voted unanimously in favor of the constitutionality of the plan of union. "A number of the members of this Council," Garber stated, "told me that my document had been of great value in forming the decision."[109]

Not one to rest on his laurels, Garber, encouraged by Few and others, next plunged energetically into the writing of a short history of the division and reunion of American Methodism. Completing the manuscript in record-breaking time (from late July to the end of December, 1938), Garber entitled his book *The Methodists Are One People* and, no doubt to the great satisfaction of the publisher, Cokesbury Press, read the galley proofs and prepared the index with sufficient expedition for the book to appear even before the great Methodist Uniting Conference in Kansas City in May, 1939. Garber's training in historical research—he had, after

all, received the doctorate in history at the University of Pennsylvania—obviously stood him in good stead. A prominent northern Methodist and scholar, after reading some of Garber's writings about the nineteenth-century schism and its long-lasting effects, made an interesting observation to Garber: "It has been our adopted policy and practice to make no reference to the era of separation. For me and those I can influence, it does not exist. Maybe such a policy is not as wise as your own in bringing everything into the open."[110]

In light of Garber's prominence in Methodist reunification, it is not surprising that various acquaintances began to speculate about a bright future for him in the church. When a divinity student showed Elbert Russell a letter and press clipping from Garber in Kansas City, Russell predicted that Garber would be "one of the biggest men in the new Methodist church" and added that he had "a genius for administration, a capacity for hard work and a fine knowledge of how to handle people" that would carry him far. When the student suggested that Garber might make a good bishop, Russell reportedly replied, "I do not know whether he would have it."[111] A prominent Methodist leader and intimate friend who knew Garber perhaps as well or better than Russell seemed somehow more prescient about an episcopal future. Congratulating Garber on his decision to remain at Duke, this friend added: "I was not joking about developments a few years from now in the Southeastern Jurisdiction [of the United Methodist Church]. I think that little difficulty will be experienced in putting that over, if you want it."[112]

Regardless of what might lie ahead and as busy as Garber obviously was, he also found time to counsel and help Duke's divinity students in various ways. One of them wrote him a fairly typical comment: "I have never before known a man who held as important a position as you hold to be as friendly to the students." A recent graduate of the school likewise hailed Garber by declaring, "Sailing the seas of this old world has lost much of its difficulties since I acquired your friendship."[113]

As is sometimes the case in human affairs, one of Garber's great strengths—his love for and zeal to serve Methodism—may have been also, in one way, a problem. The Divinity School from the beginning was carefully planned to be ecumenical, in faculty, student body, and curriculum. The fact that a Quaker, Elbert Russell, had served for a long period as the second dean of the school underscored that nondenominational principle, and in 1941 six denominations were represented on the faculty. Yet Garber declared from the beginning of his deanship that one of his major purposes was to relate the school more closely to Methodism. "We really have only one task here [at Duke]," he declared to an old friend," and that is the preparing of consecrated, trained young men for our Methodist ministry." He hoped that "we can develop a spirit of unity in our faculty

so that we will all have one common purpose."[114] Such a focus at least ran the risk of slighting or downplaying the ecumenical aspect of the Divinity School as well as the scholarly dimension of the graduate program in religion. Whether that actually happened is unclear, for Garber's deanship, as things turned out, proved to be relatively short and significantly influenced by developments connected with the involvement of the United States in World War II.

As dean, Garber certainly tried to make a difference, and there were a variety of changes. For one thing, there were some indications that faculty morale or perhaps *esprit de corps* had not been quite at the optimum level. "I agree with your statement," Garber wrote to James Cannon III, "that because of the lack of any definite plan many of us have fallen into controversy and antagonisms." Garber went on to say that he did not know exactly how it could be done, but he hoped "we can secure unity in our school which we have not had up to the present time." He was, he promised, certainly planning a program aiming toward that goal.[115]

How much Garber may have succeeded in what is sometimes difficult with any group, certainly one including learned and individualistic academics, is not known. There was, however, an increase in social activities that were carefully planned to include both faculty and students. A series of teas in the school's social room began in the fall of 1941, and following Garber's installation as dean, he and Mrs. Garber were the hosts for a reception in the ballroom of the Union building to which students, faculty, and friends of the Divinity School were invited.[116]

Alongside the attempt to facilitate social interchange came a new approach to the use of York Chapel in the Divinity School. While much used from the time of the building's occupancy in September, 1930, the small chapel had remained unadorned and stark. Garber led his colleagues to modify that by installing a maroon carpet and drapes and acquiring maroon robes for members of the choir and black robes for speakers. Fresh flowers on the altar added an additional touch of beauty. To avoid the conflict with classes that had apparently hindered some of the earlier services in the chapel, Monday and Wednesday mornings from 11:30 to noon were set aside for corporate worship. While distinguished visitors were to be invited to speak occasionally, the routine plan was to have a faculty member speak on Mondays, with a student presiding, and a student speak on Wednesdays, with a faculty person presiding.[117]

A prominent Episcopalian in Winston-Salem gave copies of the Book of Common Prayer to be used in York Chapel. Thanking him, Garber explained that one of his purposes as dean was to have dignified and beautiful worship services and thereby to acquaint students with the best liturgical forms. "In my estimation there is no devotional book that can compare with the Book of Common Prayer," Garber declared.[118]

Another way in which Garber moved energetically to strengthen the school was through a drive to increase the number of scholarships. Long frustrated by the fact that the Duke Endowment's grants could go only to students who served in rural Methodist churches in North Carolina, Garber worked with urban Methodist churches to gain scholarships for students who could do their summer apprenticeships in those churches. A prominent Methodist layman and Trinity alumnus in Raleigh, N. Edward Edgerton, especially assisted in the campaign, first by personally creating a scholarship fund in the Divinity School—"the first specific donation for the exclusive benefit" of the school—and then by helping to persuade his church, the Edenton Street Methodist Church in Raleigh, and other churches to donate to the fund.[119] One year after launching the drive, Garber reported that the school was already able to admit nine additional students, and he felt confident that the five-year goal would be reached.[120]

Enrollment in the Divinity School grew as thousands of ordained ministers became chaplains in the nation's burgeoning military forces, and their replacements had to come from the seminaries. Recognizing that there were some students and faculty who held to their pacifist principles even after the United States entered World War II, Garber declared that he could not agree with that position. "I feel that the future of civilization and Christianity is at stake in this conflict," he asserted.[121] Many of the school's alumni apparently shared the dean's outlook, for by November, 1942, there were sixty-two of them serving as chaplains, and more names were added later. The *Divinity School Bulletin* printed excerpts from some of their letters to Garber and thereby revealed a new and no doubt unforeseen dimension of the school's mission. "The opportunities for service to the men are without parallel," one alumnus-chaplain reported, "—helping the square pegs to find square holes, consoling the homesick, cheering the lonely, providing proper recreation for the man with time on his hands, showing more than one man how to enter the Christian fellowship, and so on. I mean it when I say the work is truly thrilling." Another enterprising alumnus stated that he used a motorcycle to pick up the mail for distribution in the hospital wards, coached the regimental boxing team, and organized church parades led by the regimental band. "As the band marches up 7th Avenue [of the camp] those going to church fall out from their barracks and . . . march to our chapel," he wrote. "My attendance has been the best of all Protestant services on the Post."[122]

On the homefront, activities in the Divinity School could hardly match those of the chaplains for color and drama. Yet the war years did bring marked growth. Enrollment climbed steadily, reaching 152 in 1945. At a time when the ministry remained closed to women, the school responded to the call of the Methodist General Conference in 1944 for more "young women . . . prepared to be teachers of religious education in our churches"

by introducing that autumn a master's degree in religious education.[123] While the alumni had always been able to borrow books from the school's library, the faculty voted early in 1944 to make the library's resources available to ministers of all denominations. Special funds provided for the purchase of multiple copies of current religious books most in demand, and lists of such books were widely distributed. Less than a year after the program started, 1,429 ministers representing 27 denominations and living in all 48 states had borrowed 2,897 volumes.[124]

Another type of outreach, one clearly foreshadowed earlier, accelerated during World War II, and that was the Divinity School's interest in and sympathy for the plight of America's blacks. An alumnus of Trinity College, N. C. Newbold, had long worked quietly but effectively in his post in the North Carolina Department of Education to improve the state's educational opportunities for blacks. Early in 1940, after a conference at Duke arranged by Newbold, Elbert Russell undertook to teach a graduate-level class for black ministers at what was then North Carolina College for Negroes (later North Carolina Central University) located in Durham. The Divinity School loaned the library materials needed for the course. The following semester Russell taught another course there while Gilbert Rowe offered a special course on the undergraduate level. At the same time, Kenneth Clark taught courses at Shaw University, a black Baptist institution in Raleigh.[125] Garber, who named a faculty committee to give special consideration as to how the school might help in the training of black ministers and church workers, spoke to various black groups. After one well-received series of lectures he had given at Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta, then an all-black institution, Garber advised a close friend that he had had a wonderful time, for "as you often say, I was with my own people at Gammon." Garber, Russell, Rowe, Clark, Shelton Smith, and no doubt numerous others among the school's faculty and student body were clearly more sensitized about what a famous sociologist, Gunnar Myrdal, termed during World War II "the American dilemma" than were others at Duke at that time. They probably shared the viewpoint, rather rarely encountered in that era, expressed by a white professor at Gammon who wrote to tell Garber how much the black preachers, faculty members, and students had appreciated his lectures: "How much they have been deprived of through *white supremacy*! How greatly they have used the little that has fallen to them!"[126]

Heightened awareness of racial injustice suffered by blacks was not the only by-product of World War II in the Divinity School. As early as 1929, Elbert Russell had informed the Rockefeller Foundation that the "presence of a Jewish professor on our staff would be a welcome influence for comprehension and the scientific attitude."[127] Despite that stance, however, not until the war years did the school actually move to underscore

further its nonsectarian nature by adding a Jewish scholar to the faculty. A donor who wished to remain anonymous at the time—Sidney J. Stern of Greensboro, North Carolina—provided money to pay the salary of a Jewish scholar to teach courses in the history and thought of Judaism, and President Flowers requested Branscomb to lead the search. After consulting leading Jewish scholars in the country as well as a representative of the donor, Branscomb reported that the consensus was that the Divinity School should name an American Jew rather than a refugee, that the individual should be competent in the area of Judaism's beginnings, and that the person should not be a Zionist. The individual who best fitted the requirements and was available, according to Branscomb, was Rabbi Judah Goldin, who had obtained his doctorate in Hebrew literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America under a teacher whom Branscomb described as the most distinguished Talmudic scholar in the English-speaking world. When offered the position, Goldin, who was then with the Hillel Foundation at the University of Illinois, accepted and thus became the first Jewish member of the school's faculty.[128]

A number of constructive changes thus characterized Garber's deanship, but it turned out to be a brief one. The development that his friends had predicted at the time of Methodist unification became a reality in June, 1944: at age forty-five he was elected to the bishopric by the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference of the United Methodist Church and assigned to the southern and central European area, with his episcopal residence in Geneva, Switzerland.[129]

Fortunately for the Divinity School, an attractive and logical successor to Garber was already on the faculty, Harvie Branscomb, and he was promptly named acting and then regular dean of the school. By the age of forty-nine, Branscomb had achieved distinction not only as a New Testament scholar but in the academic world at large: director of libraries at Duke University from 1934 until 1941 and then director of a special research project for the Association of American Libraries in 1937–38, Branscomb gained national stature as an educational administrator. Sought earlier by Union Theological Seminary as well as other institutions, Branscomb had remained at Duke partly because President Few had struggled to hold him.[130] His tenure as dean would be, as matters turned out, all too brief, but he hit the ground running.

In a long memorandum to President Flowers, Branscomb began by emphasizing the Divinity School's opportunity and obligation to provide educational leadership in the field of religion in the South. The region, he suggested, was the stronghold of Protestant Christianity in the nation: with 28 percent of the country's population, the South contained 41 percent of its Protestant church membership, and out of every $1,000 of income in the South, $16.02 went for religious purposes, as compared

with $10.50 for the nation as a whole. After recapitulating the various special features of the school, Branscomb turned to problems that had to be solved if the school was to render service commensurate with its opportunities.

First among the problems, he submitted, was that of staffing. Garber for a year or more had sought a professor of homiletics who could also preach in the chapel, and that appointment still needed to be made. Outler in theology had resigned, and retirements would soon leave other critical vacancies. Branscomb asserted that no request took precedence over the importance of securing the best possible faculty for the school.

Other basic problems, according to Branscomb, related to the improvement of the quality and morale of the student body. As mentioned earlier, he believed the divinity students as a whole to be superior in character and purpose and, perhaps, equal in native ability to other professional students, but he thought them "decidedly more limited in social background and worldly experience." This meant that the school had a special responsibility to "plan its training so as to overcome as much as possible deficiencies in social experience, cultural knowledge and, above all, good judgment." The school, therefore, had to resist pressure to seek larger enrollments and concentrate on the quality of its product.

Branscomb also hoped to find ways in which the school could most effectively serve ministers out in the field. This would not be a mere advertising device, he argued; it was as much a part of the obligations of the school as were frequent public clinics and symposia in a first-rate medical school.

Finally, and one is tempted to say inevitably, Branscomb pointed to space problems. In the case of the Divinity School, however, he clearly had a point. Unlike the assertive dean of Duke's law school, who had demanded and gotten exclusive use of its new building early in the 1930s even though the students in law were not numerous, the Divinity School shared the Gray building with students and faculty in the arts and sciences. Branscomb reported, in fact, that aside from the small Divinity School library and York Chapel, the school had come to have less than half of the building at its disposal; of fifteen classrooms, only four were permanently assigned to the school. Since the Divinity School had grown, it clearly had either to recover space it had given up or to seek new space. Branscomb thought, in fact, that it might be easier to interest a possible donor in a new building for the Divinity School than in a supplementary classroom building. Since housing for divinity students was also a continuing problem, Branscomb, harking back to his experience as a Rhodes scholar at Oxford and again pushing an idea that he and others had earlier advanced, suggested that thought be given to a "single divinity

quadrangle," with an instructional building as its architectural center and adjacent dormitories for students.[131]

Branscomb did not get the "divinity quadrangle," but he did gain authorization for important new appointments to the faculty. Robert Earl Cushman, a future dean of the school, came in 1945 to teach systematic theology. An undergraduate at Wesleyan with his divinity and doctoral degrees from Yale, the latter in 1941, Cushman had been chairman of the Department of Religion at the University of Oregon prior to his appointment at Duke. In homiletics and as preacher to the university, James T. Cleland brought a Scottish presence that would long have a marked impact on Duke and especially on the chapel. Serving as a pastor in several small Scottish churches after receiving his divinity degree from Glasgow University in 1927, Cleland then crossed the Atlantic to obtain another degree in theology from Union Theological Seminary in New York. He returned to Glasgow University before going to Amherst College as professor of Bible in 1931 and came to Duke from that position.

Appointments less senior than those of Cushman and Cleland were also made in 1945. Franklin W. Young, who took his doctorate in biblical studies at Duke, was named as instructor in biblical literature and would shortly become dean of students in the Divinity School. A Dartmouth graduate, he had received his divinity degree from Crozer Theological Seminar. Another new instructor, John Jesse Rudin II, was named to teach public speaking. He did his undergraduate work at Willamette University and received a divinity degree from Asbury Theological Seminary and a master's in theology from Boston University. After graduate study in Northwestern's department of speech, Rudin chaired the department of speech at Northwest Missouri State Teachers College prior to joining the faculty at Duke.[132]

Another young scholar who joined the faculty to teach Christian ethics in 1946, Waldo Beach, was destined to spend the remainder of his career at Duke. A native of Connecticut who graduated from Wesleyan University, Beach took both his divinity and doctoral degrees from Yale. Then from 1942 until he moved to Duke, he served as a professor of religion and pastor at Antioch College.

In addition to playing a key role in making the new appointments that would long influence the Divinity School, Branscomb impressively addressed another need that he had mentioned in his memorandum to President Flowers: helpful service to ministers already out in the field. An estimated 1,500 ministers and laymen attended the first annual convocation held by the Divinity School in February, 1946. Among those taking leading parts on the program were Henry Sloane Coffin, president emeritus of Union Theological Seminary; Reinhold Niebuhr, a professor at the

same institution and perhaps the nation's most widely known theologian of the era; Henry R. Luce, publisher of *Time* and other magazines and a trustee at Union; G. Bromley Oxnam, bishop in the United Methodist Church; and James W. Fulbright, United States senator from Arkansas and a leading layman in the Disciples of Christ church.[133]

Clearly a mover and shaker as a scholar-administrator, Branscomb, who had resisted various earlier offers from other institutions, accepted the invitation to become chancellor of Vanderbilt University in the fall of 1946. The school's most recent historian notes that Branscomb, like each of his predecessors in the job, wanted to make Vanderbilt a great university in its part of the South. He would spend sixteen years at the task, and the historian concludes that Branscomb "came closer than any predecessor to achieving the goal."[134]

Branscomb's acceptance of the larger challenge posed by the top post at Vanderbilt may well have been partly rooted in a certain disappointment he felt about developments at Duke. In his later autobiography, Branscomb explained that among the reasons he had declined the position at Union Theological Seminary were his and his family's preference for living where they were rather than in New York City and his own liking for being part of a university rather than being confined solely to a seminary. Branscomb's library work had demonstrated his administrative ability, and Branscomb recalled that his friend, President Few, had once said that he wanted Branscomb to succeed him at Duke. That did not happen, of course, for Robert L. Flowers became Few's successor. Although Branscomb clearly admired Few as one possessing a "quick, keen mind" despite giving an initial impression of "being languid and a little shy," he also disagreed with Few on certain matters and recalled telling him so. Flowers, Branscomb noted, was the "opposite in type and personality" of Few. Jovial and popular with alumni and the business community, Flowers, according to Branscomb, had one great goal for Duke: "to produce football and baseball teams that would defeat the University of North Carolina."[135]

Regardless of the reasons for Branscomb's departure, faculty members in the Divinity School were stunned by the development and expressed deep concern about the question of his successor. Petry emphasized to President Flowers that the "academic attainments of our incoming Dean" had to be quite high if he was to "foster the scholarly work of the Divinity School in close and appreciated cooperation with the [group in] Graduate Studies in Religion and the Graduate School as a whole." On that depended "the preservation and enhancement of our steadily rising stock in the field of Graduate leadership throughout the South and the nation." Cushman, whom Branscomb had just helped recruit, confessed that he

was shocked by the resignation but hoped for a successor who shared Branscomb's ideals of quality and excellence in theological education.[136]

Fate was not kind to the Divinity School in the matter of Branscomb's successor. Paul A. Root, who had received both his divinity and doctoral degrees from Duke before becoming a professor of the sociology of religion at the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, was offered and accepted the Duke deanship in March, 1947. Declaring that he considered the position "the biggest thing that the church has to offer," Root added that he was "not ambitious for anything else."[137] Before Root could even assume the post, however, he died of a heart attack in Dallas on May 13, 1947.

In addition to the faculty's undoubted dismay, the divinity students were sufficiently disturbed by the situation to convey their concern to the chairman of the faculty, Gilbert Rowe. "The students feel that another year without centralized administrative authority," they avowed, "will have grave consequences for student morale." They also feared that the "unsettled conditions" in the Divinity School would "lessen the attraction of the school for prospective students."[138]

The plight of the Divinity School was no doubt heightened by the fact that the university as a whole was undergoing something of a quiet, half-hidden crisis in leadership at the time. At age seventy-six and in increasingly frail health, Robert L. Flowers was simply not able to cope with the demands of the university presidency. Several of his associates in the administration, none with strong academic or faculty connections, attempted to cover for him but could not actually compensate for the lack of vigorous presidential leadership. Perhaps more than Few, Flowers displayed a wary nervousness about faculty involvement in university governance and high-level decision-making, and this attitude was more or less shared by his associates.[139]

Given this situation, the fact that a new dean of the Divinity School actually was named in July, 1947, was fortunate, perhaps even remarkable. Less fortunate, however, was the fact that he would serve as dean only briefly. Harold A. Bosley, at age forty, came to become dean of the Divinity School from the Mt. Vernon Place Methodist Church in Baltimore, Maryland—the first dean to have served a pastorate. A native of Nebraska and graduate of Nebraska Wesleyan College, Bosley had received both his divinity and doctoral degrees from the University of Chicago. He had taught at Iowa State Teachers College for three years before going to the Baltimore church and was the author of three books.

Methodist Bishop William Walter Peele, a Trinity alumnus and chairman of the trustee committee on the Divinity School, apparently played a key role in selecting Bosley for the deanship. Hersey Spence praised

Bosley to Peele in enthusiastic terms: "He's got everything. He is the only man in America—and perhaps the world who is a scholar (Ph.D. Chicago, '33), a successful pastor, a great preacher, a writer of significant books, a successful teacher in a theological seminary, a director in religious activities and teacher in a church college, a he man, and at the same time teachable, modest and considerate." Spence thought Bosley would put the Divinity School and even Duke itself on the map.[140]

Spence's reference to Bosley as a "he man" no doubt related to the fact that the new dean—at six feet, three inches in height and weighing 215 pounds—was a physically large man and had in fact played football as an undergraduate. Upon arriving in Durham, Bosley was asked by someone who did not know him if he was one of Coach Wallace Wade's new football recruits.[141]

Installed as dean in an impressive service in the chapel in June, 1948, Bosley was pleased by the occasion and thought it gave "opportunity for the University to say publicly that, in its estimation, religion continues to be a central concern."[142] Apart from such academic and religious ceremony, however, Bosley faced a challenging task. Postwar inflation caused all Duke salaries, including those in the Divinity School, to be increasingly inadequate, and the frequent changes in the deanship no doubt had taken a certain toll on the school's morale. Moreover, the Association of Methodist Theological Seminaries had sponsored a study of its ten members, and the report concerning Duke's Divinity School caused some consternation among the faculty. Statements concerning inadequate salaries at Duke as well as at the other schools came as no surprise, and neither did the suggestion that the Divinity School's physical facilities had become inadequate. With scholarly reputations of several key faculty members still in the process of being made, the visiting committee's comment in that area no doubt stung but was perhaps accepted as valid: "There is probably no one on the list [of faculty members] who could be called distinguished in the international field, and there are few who could be so described with regard to the national field."

Another aspect of criticism of the school drew a vigorous rebuttal from Bosley and his new colleagues. The visiting committee believed that there was "too great a tendency toward departmental specialization within the faculty both in its selection and in the thinking of the faculty itself." This related to a criticism of the curriculum as being developed from the point of view of departments of specialized study rather than the functions of the Christian minister. While the Divinity School faculty undertook a careful restudy of the curriculum and agreed that it should be supplemented by more extensive work in the "so-called practical field," the Duke faculty, speaking through Bosley, chided the visiting committee for failing to see or stress the important fact that the Divinity School was a graduate

as well as a professional school, that the dual nature of the school "laid a greater emphasis upon scholarly research as one of the most effective tools of the ministry." Bosley asserted that no change in the curriculum would be made to lessen that emphasis.

Bosley concluded his article on the visiting committee's report and the school's response by noting that one appointment had already been made in the area of "practical theology": Russell L. Dicks, a graduate of the University of Oklahoma and Union Theological Seminary who had gained considerable experience in both teaching and preaching as well as hospital work, was named an associate professor of pastoral care in 1948. To replace Ormond, who had retired, A. J. Walton was named associate professor of practical theology and director of field work. A West Virginian who had extensive experience as a Methodist pastor before receiving his doctorate in divinity from Morris Harvey College in 1935, Walton served there as a dean before becoming the director of evangelism in the extension division of the Southern Methodist church (1935–39) and then superintendent of town and country work in the United Methodist Church for the five years prior to his appointment at Duke. Bosley believed that one or possibly two additional appointments in the same general area might be made soon. Meantime, additional fellowships were urgently needed for men and women who were preparing to teach religion on the college level. He hoped too that the school's student body might grow to number at least 200, or about 50 more than were then enrolled.[143]

Funds available to the school were, in fact, slowly accumulating. Even before Bosley became dean, James A. Gray of Winston-Salem, chairman of the board of R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, gave a $100,000 endowment to the school to support its educational services to North Carolina churches and ministers.[144] Support of the school from the General Conference of the United Methodist Church also increased, from around $2,800 per year to $15,000, and Bosley reported that Duke could anticipate a more equitable distribution of funds to the ten Methodist divinity schools.[145]

While deans inevitably must concern themselves with money matters, they do—at least, some do—occasionally publish books. Bosley's *Main Issues Confronting Christendom* appeared in 1948, soon after his arrival at Duke, and in an interesting illustration of academic freedom, one of the more junior members of the faculty, Waldo Beach, reviewed the volume in the *Duke Divinity School Bulletin*. Praising the "sermonic essays" for their "moral seriousness" and "forthright championing of what are quite evidently the unavoidable Christian ethical causes," Beach nevertheless confessed to having a "mixed reaction" to Bosley's volume and believed "the most serious questions" about the book concerned the theological premises on which the dean's Christian ethics rested. There seemed to be,

the reviewer continued, "some hidden ambiguity" in the dean's various definitions of God, "though in the main it would be fair to say that his God could take up residence more comfortably in Chicago than in Geneva or Basel." Beach suspected, in conclusion, that "the most real 'main issues confronting Christendom' are precisely the theological questions, even more than the ethical ones, which the new continental theology is raising, and which . . . Bosley does not confront."[146]

Beach's reference to Chicago proved strangely apropos, for a year later, in January, 1950, Bosley resigned as dean—to go to that city. To be more precise, Bosley became the pastor of the First Methodist Church in Evanston, Illinois, which the *Duke Divinity School Bulletin* described as "easily the first church in American Methodism." Bosley himself explained that as he had "studied the unfolding pattern of responsibilities in the deanship" if the Divinity School was to "continue its growth toward adequacy," he had concluded that he "could be more useful in the pulpit of the church than in the deanship."[147]

The Divinity School, having had three different leaders in less than a decade—or four, if one counts Root, who did not live to assume the post—was back to square one concerning the deanship. Despite that problem, the school which Few, Soper, Russell, Garber, Branscomb and others had launched so hopefully in 1926 had made great strides in its first quarter century, but its brightest days clearly lay ahead. As the visiting committee representing the Methodist seminaries had suggested, the school's prestige, a highly vaunted matter in the academic world, still left something to be desired. Yet if "generous service to humanity" was, as President Few had said, what Duke University truly was all about, then surely the Divinity School had conspicuously done its part.