



12-5-1984

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Recommended Citation

Jacoby, Harold, "Methodism, Education, and the University of the Pacific" (1984). *University of the Pacific Individual Histories*. 21.

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METHODISM, EDUCATION, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC

I am taking as the central question of this discourse: "Is the University of the Pacific a Methodist institution?" And this leads almost immediately to a second - and more basic question: "What are the identifying symptoms of a church related college?" For unless we are in agreement as to the yardsticks or other measuring instruments to be employed, we cannot usefully answer the first question.

If "originating sponsorship" is to be the test, there can be no question that the answer is "yes." Pacific was founded in 1851 by action of the California Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Its initial name, moreover - California Wesleyan College - clearly reveals its roots - even if within its first year it adopted the more pretentious name, University of the Pacific. This founding action of the Conference, which itself was not very old, was very much in the Methodist tradition. Hardly had the Methodist Episcopal Church been established - in Baltimore in 1784 - than it authorized the founding of its first college nationally.

Over the years since that date, Methodist conferences established 560 colleges, universities and junior colleges, of which 110 continue in existence and affiliation with the United Methodist Church. Some of them have disappeared - as was the case with Napa College, which merged with the University of the Pacific in 1892, after an independent existence of 22 years. Others have "disaffiliated" as was the case with the University of Southern California in 1952. But Pacific remains an affiliated institution in good standing. In that respect, Pacific is a church related college.

But origin - or even continued affiliation - may not provide us with a satisfactory answer, as it tells us little about the institution itself; so we must go on to some other tests.

Does the Church own the college property, appoint the governing Board, and maintain close control of the life of the institution? This may be the case with some Church institutions, but this is not the pattern characteristic of the Methodist Church, and - to the best of my knowledge - has never been the case with Pacific. This test we must reject as being inappropriate.

Let's try another: Does Pacific require church membership or creedal commitment for student admission, or for employment on the faculty? Again, this has not been the policy of the Methodist Church, nor has it been the practice at Pacific in the years I have known - or read about. If this should be your test, then you may write Pacific off as a church-related college, but this has never been the expectation of the Church.

Does the institutional program reflect some of the special concerns and interests of the Church in its academic and social programs? Now we're getting down to some sensitive areas. Time was - in my undergraduate days, for instance - a clear affirmative answer could be given to this test. We had weekly chapel services with required attendance. To graduate, one must have completed course work in Old and New Testament history or literature. Campus regulations prohibited dancing and smoking on campus, reflecting admonitions contained in the book of Discipline of the Methodist Church at that time. All of these requirements and prohibitions, however, have long since gone - looked upon by our contemporary students as curiosities - much as we - in my day - smiled at the 19th century prohibition against men and woman students sitting together in chapel. To many, however, these more recent changes may appear to be clear evidence that Pacific is no longer entitled to be considered church-related; that it has failed or rebelled against the very body that brought it into being and gave it strength and support. Before we rush into such a

conclusion, we owe it to the University to examine some of its experiences over the years and the circumstances that contributed to the changes that have come about.

Time was - in the 1880's - when UOP was a strong, prestigious university, of which the Methodist community could well be proud. Its decline from that eminence followed the establishment of the University of California in 1868 and of Stanford University in 1891 - institutions with enormous resources and formidable faculties made possible by those resources. A stupid conflict on the UOP campus in 1890 involving students, faculty and administration, led to the entire senior class transferring to Stanford and becoming the first graduating class from that institution; and to the resignation of four eminent members of the faculty to take distinguished positions elsewhere. Poor student and faculty morale brought the enrollment down precipitously, and the Church was unable to provide the resources needed to meet the situation. To its credit, the institution recognized the situation, and in 1911, it voluntarily changed its name from the University of the Pacific to the College of the Pacific. The only strong program for many years was that of the Conservatory of Music.

In 1919, Tully C. Knoles was invited to take on the seemingly thankless job of president, and in an early communication to the Board of Trustees, he summed up the three options facing the institution: To become a junior college; to sell the campus and use the funds to support the Wesley Foundation programs at UC Berkeley and Stanford; or to move the college to a more promising location - which was the option chosen and in 1924, the college moved to its present location in Stockton.

The move to Stockton breathed new life into the College, but with it came a significant change in the make-up of the student body. When the college was in San Jose, most of the students selected it because it had

Methodist connections; in Stockton, most students selected it in spite of its Methodist connections. This was not accidental. Stockton had been selected because it was in an area not being served by any four-year institution; and as a result, Pacific became attractive because of its location, not its denominational affiliation. And within a few years, Methodist students became not merely a minority segment of the student body, but not even the largest denominational-preference group. And this situation had its impact on student attitudes toward some of the restrictive aspects of campus regulations, and led to some of the early changes in the regulations.

Then came the depression. The college was facing serious financial problems, but there was more: Stockton had no junior college, and local students wishing free education had to travel to Modesto or Sacramento to attend school. To avoid this, it was proposed that Pacific accept these students with the city paying their tuition, but this was shown to be an impossibility under state law. In 1935, in a moment of creative genius, a public junior college was formed - the Stockton Junior College - which proceeded to rent space on the Pacific campus, employ jointly the members of the Pacific faculty, and open its doors to students. Pacific, for its part, discontinued its freshman and sophomore year work, and became a senior college only.

This arrangement succeeded in meeting the immediate needs of the two parties - the students of Stockton and the College of the Pacific - but it had two significant effects on Pacific's claim to church connection. Because Stockton College was unwilling to accept all students who might wish to come to the Pacific campus from outside the Stockton area, freshman students from Methodist families living in other junior college districts found it difficult to enroll in what was - in effect - Pacific's lower

division, and this impaired the image of Pacific as their church's college in the eyes of many Methodist families.

Internally, the arrangement meant the dropping of the weekly chapel requirement, and limiting the Bible course requirement merely to the junior and senior students in the College of the Pacific - this because under state law such requirements could not legally be imposed on students in a public junior college.

Came the war - which brought in its own disruptions - and subsequently the arrival on campus of large numbers of veterans. The relationship with the junior college was amicably terminated in 1951 and Pacific became - again - a four year institution. To meet the needs of the enlarged program and the increased number of students, facilities had to be enlarged and improved, and new faculty added, and this had a major effect on the operating budget of the college - and ultimately on the whole matter of church financial support.

Conference support had never been particularly lavish. In 1951 the College received but \$7,000 from the Conference budget. This amount was increased over the decade to \$44,000 in 1959, but in 1960, the Conference made a major policy change with the respect to the support of several institutions such as the Fred Finch Home, the Pacific School of Religion and the College. Instead of being included in the conference budget, these institutions became 'recommended items' and the institutions were given "the authority to solicit funds" from individual churches and church members. The conference continued to provide funds for a religious life program on the campus, but in the form of a greatly reduced contribution.

Caught between a dramatically increasing operating budget and the cut-off of Conference funds, the University - it had re-assumed that name in 1961 - resorted to increasing the student tuition charges - relating them

to the tuition being charged at the major independent colleges in California - Stanford, Occidental, Pomona, and USC. While every effort was made to provide financial aid to worthy students, the announced tuition figures had a chilling effect on many households, particularly of those with Methodist connections where otherwise there might have been an interest in attending the University. In other words, Pacific was perceived as having priced itself out of its natural market.

But more was to come. Beginning after the war, Pacific had begun to make extensive use of several federal grant and lending programs - for dormitory buildings, for student aid, for special educational programs - and these had become a significant portion of the annual budget. In November, 1964, a suit was entered in the Maryland courts alleging that the state aid being given to four church-related colleges was unconstitutional - and this action caused concern among private church-related institutions across the country. If this suit were successful - and if the action were to be upheld by the United States Supreme court, it could mean the end of federal assistance to church-related colleges. In anticipation of the worst, college after college across the country took steps to reduce whatever tangible evidence remained of church connection. With Pacific this took the form - with Conference approval - of terminating the practice of having the Conference elect the members of the Board of Regents. Actually, this was a cosmetic action inasmuch as the practice of submitting Board nominees for election had become merely a formality, but it represented one more symbolic action which seemed to separate Pacific from its Methodist origins. Actually, the worst did not happen. The Maryland courts did declare that three of the four schools were not eligible for Maryland state aid, but when the cases were appealed to the Supreme Court, that august body declined to become involved - which meant that church-rela-

ted colleges could continue to be eligible to receive federal funds. But the University did not go back to asking the Conference to pass final approval on the membership of the Board of Regents.

Despite these many vicissitudes, the University has survived - and prospered as an educational institution. But the question arises: At what cost? In order successfully to cope with the threatening events and circumstances it encountered through the years, has it been at the cost of shedding one after another the traits and practices that once stamped it as a church-related college? Has it, after all these years, become indistinguishable from the State and purely secular colleges and universities? What still remains other than the formal fact of affiliation - to justify pride in, and support of the University by the United Methodist Church and the people who call themselves Methodists? To these disturbingly important questions, let us add one more: What is it that is expected of Methodist institutions by the United Methodist Church?

In a 1976, report of the National Commission on United Methodist Higher Education, four major themes are identified as having characterized the "almost two centuries of United Methodist involvement in higher education." These, it would appear, could usefully be used to assist us in our quest. How well does the University of the Pacific reflect and embody these themes in its operations?

The first of these themes is: "Education should be available to all persons regardless of social standing, ethnic identity or gender." In the present world, this is hardly a demanding requirement, but it has been the policy of Pacific long before we heard of civil rights marches or ERA amendments. Moreover, it is an area in which Pacific has sought to live by the spirit of the theme, not merely by its letter. Since 1970, the Community Involvement Program has annually provided tuition scholarships

to scores of economically deprived young people of the Stockton area, most of whom are from ethnic minority populations. Also, on the campus this year, we have almost 500 students from more than 55 countries of the world, studying in all the schools of the University, given support by the Foreign Student Services staff in the recently opened Bechtel International Center. These two operations suggest that Pacific's commitment to this first theme is more than merely perfunctory.

The second theme: "Education should help individuals make full use of their capabilities and experience for service. Therefore liberal and classical learning is critical along with professional and vocational training.

This is too large a matter to be dealt with adequately in the time available, but let me give one illustration of Pacific's commitment to this theme - from one of its professional programs. The degree program in the School of Pharmacy, instead of being four years in length, is five years, involving a pre-pharmacy year focused chiefly on liberal education courses. As the School states in its catalogue, it seeks to:

"nurture the personal and social development of individuals
and their sense of moral and ethical responsibilities to
the changing needs of society and of the pharmacy profession."

This is an emphasis that pervades not merely this school, but the entire institution.

The third theme: "Education should aim at high standards of student achievement based on deep concern for what is best for the person." This theme seems so obvious, one might wonder at its inclusion here, but in many institutions of note, the faculty emphasis is on research and publication - not on teaching. In fact, in such institutions, the more noted you are for your publications, the less teaching is expected of you. In such

institutions - and particularly with respect to the freshman and sophomore students - much of the teaching is turned over to graduate students. Not so at Pacific. Full professors are as likely to teach classes of freshmen as they are to conduct senior seminars. And when it comes to the periodic evaluation of the faculty for tenure and promotion, primary emphasis is placed on the individual's teaching qualities and accomplishments, and on his or her commitment to the educational development of their students. This is not an emphasis imposed on the faculty by an arbitrary administration, but one that has the full endorsement of the faculty and in which they take great pride. Let me quote from last week's student newspaper in an interview with the chairperson of the Faculty Research Committee. In a forthright fashion, she asserts, "UOP is a teaching institution, first and foremost." This from the head of the faculty group that is expected to encourage and assist research activity.

Nor does this mean that the quality of the faculty suffers in any respect. Far from it. In the recent issue of the Pacific Review it is pointed out that over the last decade or so, some 20 members of the faculty have received appointments as Fulbright scholars, and that in the current year alone, three members are on Fulbright leave - to Austria, to Venezuela, and Norway. To quote officials of the Council for the International Exchange of Scholars, the "selection of three grant winners from a college the size of UOP is highly unusual and reflects quite favorably on the calibre of the faculty at the University."

Teaching is the main business at Pacific, and students are seen as the main reason for the existence of the institution.

Finally, the fourth theme: "Education should appropriately relate faith and reason." With a faculty of several hundred persons representing several score disciplines and sub-disciplines, engaged in the education of

some 4000 students from a broad spectrum of religious backgrounds, it is difficult to say - with respect to every encounter - what is taking place with respect to faith and reason. But at no time has the University been indifferent or complacent on this score, and in various ways it has sought to encourage and facilitate this theme. At one time, Pacific's YM-YW, which traces its roots back to 1879, was one of several hundred or more Y's on American college campuses. Today that number has shrunk nationally to less than 50, one of them being the Anderson Y - as it is known today - which continues to operate on the Pacific campus as an active organization - testimony not merely to the quality of its leadership and program, but also to the supportive environment made possible by University policies and personnel. To this has now been added a University Chaplaincy, made possible by an endowment fund of a half million dollars raised jointly by the University and the Methodist Church - a campaign in which our recently retired Bishop Marvin Stuart, played a key role. Although the appointed chaplain, Gary Putnam, is an ordained Methodist minister, he is not a Methodist Campus minister, but rather a chaplain to the entire University - students, faculty and administration. Over the past several years, a number of denominational and non-denominational religious groups have been welcomed to the campus, and together with the Anderson Y, they have been joined through the efforts of the Chaplain into an Association of Campus Ministries which coordinates religious programs on the campus. Finally, mention should be made of the Tippet and Colliver lectures which annually bring to the campus presentations by outstanding scholars on various topics related to religion.

In these and related ways, the University seeks to bring about that interplay of reason and faith that - since its founding - the United Methodist Church has put forward as one of the themes that should characterize Methodist related institutions.

Is the University of the Pacific a Methodist institution? In terms of affiliation, definitely yes. But the relatedness is much more than formal and legal. Over the years, many of the practices which once reflected early Methodist influence and control may have disappeared, but through these years - and down to today - Pacific continues to be guided by, and exemplify, those themes which truly constitute the expectations of the Church. It is an educational enterprise, first and foremost - and one of increasing distinction and merit. But in its operation it remembers and seeks to be guided by its religious heritage; and it stands today as an institution in which the United Methodist Church - and Methodists generally - can take pride and confidence.

12/5/84

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