



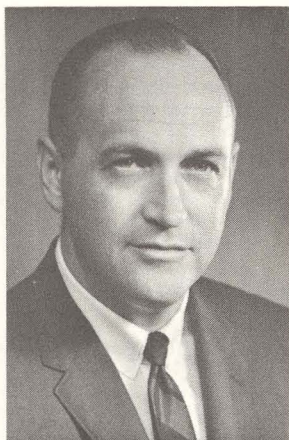
Alumni . . .

the living letters  
from WLU

What Canadians . . .

can do  
for their country

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# Alumni . . .

## The living letters from WLU

An address given by

Dr. Frederick J. Little

B.A., B.D., Th.M., M.A. Ph.D.

at the baccalaureate service for the 1968 spring graduating  
class of Waterloo Lutheran University

*"Are we beginning all over again  
to produce our credentials? Do  
we, like some people, need letters  
of introduction to you, or from  
you? No, you are all the letter we  
need, a letter written on our  
heart; any man can see it for  
what it is and read it for himself."*

II Cor. 3:1-2 (NEB)

Scarcely need I say that I am genuinely honoured - and equally humbled - to have been asked to preach the sermon at this baccalaureate service. Since past practice has been to bring in an outside speaker for the occasion, my involvement today represents a departure from custom. I'm not sure it is the wisest move. Several of you have had to tolerate me for three hours a week or more. To inflict me on you again after you thought you were done with me must surely tax your patience! But the intent of this innovation, I gather, is that someone from within the university community should be in a better position to speak meaningfully to the graduating class. I pray God for the grace to measure up to such a responsibility.

My text for this afternoon's message is a portion of St. Paul's correspondence with the Christians in Corinth. St. Paul had established a congregation in that emporium of trade and vortex of depravity. Sometime after he had left Corinth to pursue his missionary activities elsewhere, word came to him that the congregation was being torn apart by a spirit of divisiveness and was disintegrating as a result of moral lapses on the part of recent converts. Distraught by this news, St. Paul sat down and wrote a letter to the members of the Corinthian congregation, in which he upbraided them rather severely for their inconstancy.

### Paul's Credentials Questioned

For the time being, that only made the situation worse. The Corinthian Christians, it appears, began to question Paul's authority. "Who is this Paul that he thinks he can boss us around?" they asked, in effect. "He certainly appears to be a two-faced fellow, for he writes from a distance far more boldly than he spoke when among us! In fact, he gives the impression that he's the 'cat's meow' when it comes to moral and spiritual values; but what makes him think that he's got a direct pipeline to the truth? What **are** his credentials that we should listen to him and do as he says?"

To help them see the error of their ways, St. Paul wrote another letter to the Corinthians — a "painful" one, as he described it, which unfortunately became lost and so has not been preserved in our Scriptures. At the same time he commissioned his colleague Titus to go to Corinth to do what he could to heal the breach. Meanwhile, Paul continued his missionary journey, all the while with unconcealed anxiety awaiting word from Titus on how he made out. Eventually Titus returned to Paul with the good news that the factions within the Corinthian church were conciliated. Then Paul, with a view to cementing his relationships with the Christians at Corinth, dictated what is our second letter to the Corinthians, from which our text is taken. It is a very personal letter in which he writes about the intimacy of their relationship with one another. As missionary pastor and people, they are a part of one another and share in each other's joys and sorrows, successes and failures; in fact, what happens to the one, reflects on the other. Then, reminding them of their earlier "ornerness" in demanding that he produce his credentials by providing letters of recommendation, he wrote, with utter warmth of spirit: "No, you are all the letter we need." You, the



people of the congregation at Corinth, who responded to our proclamation of the Gospel — you are our letters of recommendation.

### **You Are 'Living Letters'**

And that, members of the Waterloo Lutheran University graduating class of 1968, is the message I wish to impress upon your hearts and minds today: **you** are our letters of recommendation. Let me apply this message under the theme:

#### **LIVING LETTERS**

**I. You are "Living Letters" — epistles, written on our hearts.**

Tomorrow will be a red-letter day in the lives of you young people. It brings to a climax years of work and study. A staff report recently issued by the Economic Council of Canada observes that "it is universally recognized that education enhances the quality of life of individuals, as well as the quality and energy of a whole society." If it is true, as we have so often heard it said, that Canada's most precious resource is her people, it is no less true that education is the most precious resource of Canada's people, particularly in these explosive times in which the greatest change is in the rate of change itself. Recognizing this, you entered university (many of you, graduate school) and put up with a rather gruelling grind of lectures and seminars and tests and essays and research papers and field assignments and laboratory projects — not to mention the several batteries of final examinations; and most of you found, at one time or another, that your goal could not be achieved without the investment of blood, sweat and tears. But you endured, and tomorrow you will receive the symbols of your success up to this point. For this, your family, friends, spouses and sweethearts salute you, as you doubtless salute them for the encouragement (moral as well as financial!) that meant so much in bringing you to this day.

#### **WLU Is 'Different'**

We who are associated with the university — its faculty and staff — want to extend to you our congratulations as well. But there is something more we want to say to you, for, in a very real sense, you are "epistles, written on our hearts." Learning does not consist in a professor standing in front of his class and pumping his pupils full of information. Learning is a process of interaction between professor and student, of mutual discovery on the part of both. It involves shared experiences, experiments, and excitements. Precisely because this is so, we sense something of the mind of St. Paul, as he reminded his congregation of the intimacy of their relationship. Despite the differences and difficulties that may have strained that relationship at times, he could nonetheless say to them — and we say to you: "You are epistles, written on our hearts."

But there is yet another and special sense in which you are "epistles, written on our hearts." The Corinthians had raised questions concerning Paul's credentials. They had accused him of self-esteem far out of proportion to what they thought was his ability to deliver. We are all aware that a similar accusation has frequently been levelled against our university. Let's face it: when you enrolled at Waterloo Lutheran University, you enrolled with a university that is characterized as "different." That WLU is not within the provincial system is something we've heard often enough; and when we don't tout our differences, you may be sure that others will! By many outside and even some inside, our credentials are called in question. More explicitly, from many quarters we hear the charge: the Church has no business in higher education.

As most of you know, during this past year an untold number of man-hours has been invested in an effort to state the aims and objectives of our university. This involved, on the one hand, clarifying the various ways in which WLU must compare favourably with any other university, and, on the other hand, attempting to define the differences by virtue of which we believe that WLU can make a special contribution to the student's development and to society. This sort of thing must be done occasionally; and many of the statements formulated by staff, students and faculty are indeed superb. But it needs to be remembered that any such statements, however carefully formulated, run the risk of being either unduly restrictive or open to dangerous misrepresentation or both. What should really differentiate our university is a quality of atmosphere. It goes without saying that one can't "nail down" an atmosphere or circumscribe it in a series of statements. It must be felt, sensed, experienced.

#### **You Are Also Apostles**

Because this is so, I am especially partial to St. Paul's very personal way of dealing with the question of credentials. "Does it sound as if I am again boasting about myself?" he asked the Corinthians. "Could it be that I need letters of recommendation to you or from you? No! You are all the letter we need, a letter written on our heart; any man can see it for what it is and read it for himself." And so I say to you, the graduates of WLU, as you disperse in the various directions you have in mind: "You are all the letter we need." You are "Living Letters", epistles, written on our hearts. You are a part of us, we a part of you. You know what this university stands for and you know what this university has to offer. And wherever you go, people will be reading you and appraising your "alma mater" on the basis of what they see of the university reflected in you. As the proof of the pudding is in the eating, so the calibre and quality of a university is known through its graduates. We our staking our reputation on you, "epistles, written on our hearts."



II. "Living Letters", signed, sealed, and sent. Tomorrow you get those coveted diplomas "signed and sealed." But you are the ones who are sent, which is to say that, in addition to being "epistles" you are "apostles", for that is what the term "apostle" means: one who is sent. We challenge you to go forth as "**apostles, alert to what it means to be human.**"

The exodus following tomorrow's convocation will send you off in a multitude of directions — into the world of business and commerce, into the service of social agencies and institutions, into classrooms and courtrooms, graduate schools and laboratories, into pulpits and onto platforms. Only remember wherever you go, whatever you do, you are our representatives, our interpreters. Our "PR" office can issue as many folders and flyers, booklets and magazines, posters and brochures and news releases as it pleases; but what really counts are you, the "Living Letters" which all those with whom you come in contact (bosses, associates, colleagues, friends) will automatically read for themselves and by which they will instinctively judge for themselves what kind of a product WLU turns out. We are proud of you, "epistles, written on our hearts." We ask you to "do us proud" by being "apostles, alert to what it means to be human."

### Keep Hold Of Excellence

And what does it mean to be human? The definition of man as a "rational animal" is one of long standing and undergirds our whole tradition of arts and science. In one sense it is more appropriate today than ever, for our society necessarily puts a premium on education, on knowledge, on the application of science to productivity and various aspects of life. From all quarters it has been dinned into our ears that there are more and more jobs for people with brains, and less and less for those whose only asset is brawn.

If, during your stint in university, therefore, you experienced a sharpening of the intellect, a cultivation of your faculties for research, reasoning and communication, and for correct, critical and creative thinking — this is, in itself, no mean achievement. May I urge you, as our "apostles" in your severally chosen professions, to keep your sights set on the ideal of excellence which we have attempted to hold before you. Excellence! Excellence demands self-discipline, a firm resolve to push oneself from the easy to the hard, and to keep doing the hard thing over and again. Excellence demands humility a willingness to listen to criticism and benefit by it, to reject one's own work and to try again. Excellence demands reliability, a genuine effort to do well whatever you do, so that others can bank and build on what you have done. Excellence demands adaptability, a capacity to anticipate and adjust to the changes that are taking place everywhere and in every profession at such an accelerating pace that a given individual, we are told, must be prepared

to restrain three times during his working life. Graduates who make professional excellence their watchword are indeed "apostles" of whom any university may be justifiably proud!

### Brains Not Enough

But I should like to emphasize that there is more to being human, and more involved in professional excellence, than mere expertise as a rational animal. A recent computer story tells of a couple technicians who, during a slack period, decided to tantalize their machine with the question: is there a God? They fed the question in. All the circuits worked busily for several minutes; wheels whirled and lights flashed feverishly; and then the eloquently precise answer was printed out: "There is **now!**" A god of brain-power! Theologians have told us over and again that every man is a little idol-factory; and I suspect that the most insidious of modern man's self-deceptions is his deification of brain-power. Man does not live by bread alone, nor does he live by brain alone! More than merely a "rational animal," he is a "responsible animal" — a moral and social being. And any university that is interested in the student as a "total individual" must be just as concerned with how he lives with his fellows as, it is with his professional competence. Let me try to sharpen this issue.

These are fantastic times in which we are living ... cortizones, antibiotics, heart transplants, computerized instruments to take the labour out of so much of our thought and work, unparalleled productivity! **Fantastic** ... and yet, **enigmatic!** For all this, tonight half the world will go to sleep (if sleep is possible) inadequately housed, insufficiently clothed, with gnawing hunger and advancing disease — only to wake up tomorrow to an even bleaker existence.

This is a fantastic world ... a world of atomic power, instant communication, supersonic travel, sputniks, telstars, moonshots, planetary probes! **Fantastic** ... and yet, **enigmatic!** We've harnessed the power of the atom only to live in fear lest we unleash it upon ourselves. We've reduced our world to a neighbourhood, but it remains something less than a brotherhood. And while we talk of the prospects of meeting extra-terrestrial beings, we experience more than a little difficulty in getting along with the people on our own planet, not to mention the neighbour a few doors away.

### Anxiety Haunts Affluence

These are fantastic times ... times of such unparalleled affluence that one year's luxuries become the next year's necessities, as more and more of us join the ranks of the status-seekers with their multi-car garages with radio-operated doors! **Fantastic** ... and yet, **enigmatic!** For all this, we are characterized as a people threatened with anxiety, haunted by a sense of the futility of life and the purposelessness of existence. Look at the statistics for murder and suicide, alcoholism and divorce, the number of people





visiting the psychiatrist, admitted to mental hospitals, getting their "kicks" out of life by turning themselves on with various hallucinogenics: these give some index of our situation.

**Fantastic but enigmatic!** These are the marks of our world and of our times because, I believe, they are the marks of man... alienated from God, alienated from his neighbour and alienated from himself. "In the beginning, God...", so begin our Scriptures. This is God's world still, and so long as man proposes to "play" God rather than "obey" God he will remain an enigma to himself. Man is not a self-subsistent entity capable of standing squarely and securely on his own base. Man's being is a being-in-relation; he is so constituted that he can only find fullness of life in relation to God and his fellow-man. Self-realization, and the realization of genuine community with our neighbour, depend ultimately on the realization that we are first and foremost "responsible beings," responsible to God in faith and to our neighbour in love. And I submit that only when we discover anew the nature of genuine humanity — man as God intended him and as depicted in our Judaeo-Christian tradition; only when we discover anew that the purpose of living is loving, that wisdom is a joint-product of intelligence and integrity, that the ingredients for a whole and happy life include compassion as well as competence, that professional excellence entails responsibility as well as knowledgability, that people are not pawns but persons: only then will we find our own life illumined with meaning and our life with others saturated with a measure of satisfac-

tion; and only then, I dare say, shall we be able to face the future with the confidence that better days lie ahead.

#### **Become 'Little Christs'**

This is what I mean by "apostles, alert to what it means to be human." The original apostles were men who were sent forth as "little Christs" with a message of love and hope with which to renew a sick creation. So I call upon you to be apostles, alert to what it means to be human — to manifest a professional excellence tempered with that humility of heart and spirit of service that are so desperately needed in these fantastic, but enigmatic, times.

More years ago than I care to remember, when I was a student here, a final examination for an RS (Religious Studies) course consisted of 100 true and false questions. The professor must have been fatigued by the time he came to formulate the hundredth question, or else he wanted to ensure that no one would "bomb" it completely. For question 100 read: True or false — An epistle is the wife of an apostle! Apostle and epistle are obviously not husband and wife. But the gist of my message to you this afternoon is that they are, perhaps, related! You, W.L.U. graduates of 1968, are both; and both are our credentials. You are "Living Letters" — "epistles, written on our hearts." We challenge you to be "apostles, alert to what it means to be human." As such "Living Letters," you are all the letter we need!



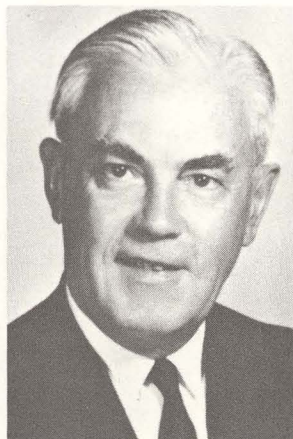
# What Canadians . . . can do for their country

An address given by

**Dr. Walter H. Johns**

B.A., Ph.D., LL.D., Des.L.

at the 1968 spring convocation of Waterloo Lutheran University.



My first obligation this afternoon is to express, on my own behalf and that of my fellow honorary graduands, our deep sense of appreciation for the kindness of the Senate and Governors of this University in inviting us here to receive an honorary degree from Waterloo Lutheran University. I find it a particular pleasure to return after so many years, and to have the privilege of addressing this Convocation.

Waterloo was where I first came as a full-time University teacher after completing my formal graduate studies at Cornell, and it was on Albert Street, just a few blocks from here, one sunny afternoon, that I met the girl who became my wife, and who is here with me this afternoon.

My four years on the Faculty of Waterloo College, as it was then, were years of almost frenzied labour, but of great satisfaction. I was doing what I loved best - teaching, studying, and writing (I dislike the pretentious word "research") and, since most of the classes were small, I came to know all my students well. The Faculty, as I recall it, consisted of less than a dozen full-time teachers and, as we were affiliated with the University of Western Ontario, we felt a deep sense of obligation to ensure that our students were sufficiently well prepared to meet those at the University on equal terms when the time of final examinations came, and we were very proud when these students excelled in competition with others from the University and the other Colleges. This provided us with a bond that overcame differences of background, age, and interests, so that we formed a team that could have been impossible otherwise. I might almost use the words of Shakespeare's **Henry V** in remembering that group —

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers."

For the younger members of the staff, especially, it meant also that the bond between Faculty members and students was close. No one could call us a large and impersonal institution in those days.

## **Delighted To Return**

But this day is not one for reminiscences, and I must conclude by saying that when I left Waterloo thirty years ago, a part of my life, a part of my heart, remained here, and I am delighted to return once again, however briefly.

The graduation ceremony is one which leaves its mark on all who participate in it, and especially on those, even the most cynical, who receive their first degrees as a part of the ceremony. It marks the end of one phase of life and the commencement of a new and wider responsibility. May I, therefore, express my warmest and most sincere congratulations to those who receive their degrees here today. You are becoming Alumni of a University with proud traditions, and you can look on your alma mater with gratitude for the heritage of learning she has bestowed upon you here.

It is customary on these occasions for the speaker to address the Convocation on some subject of current importance, and I should like to take as my theme "The Demand Society". From those apostles of what Carlyle called "The Dismal Science" we have heard much recently about "the demand economy." It has been the subject of much analysis and the basis of many forecasts on the life and prosperity, or otherwise, of the country. I do not refer to consumer demand today, but to the tendency, so conspicuous at this time, for the more vociferous and clamorous members of our society to publish demands on government at all levels, on industry, and on the public as a whole.



Never in the world's history have the standards of living of the people of the western world been higher. Self-styled reformers complain about the shocking standards of education, of living conditions, of cruelty on the part of American soldiers in Vietnam, of brutality on the part of the police, and of decadence in society generally. With either a complete disregard for truth, or a shocking ignorance of history, they describe today's society as suffering from evils never before paralleled in the long recorded testament of man. If a University education, and especially an education in the Liberal Arts, can give you anything, it should provide you with an intellectual armory which makes it possible for you, in the light of history, to view our real problems today with objectivity and sanity. There is no question but that we do have problems, — social, economic, and political — from the parish church and the community league to the international scene.

### Fights Are Nothing New

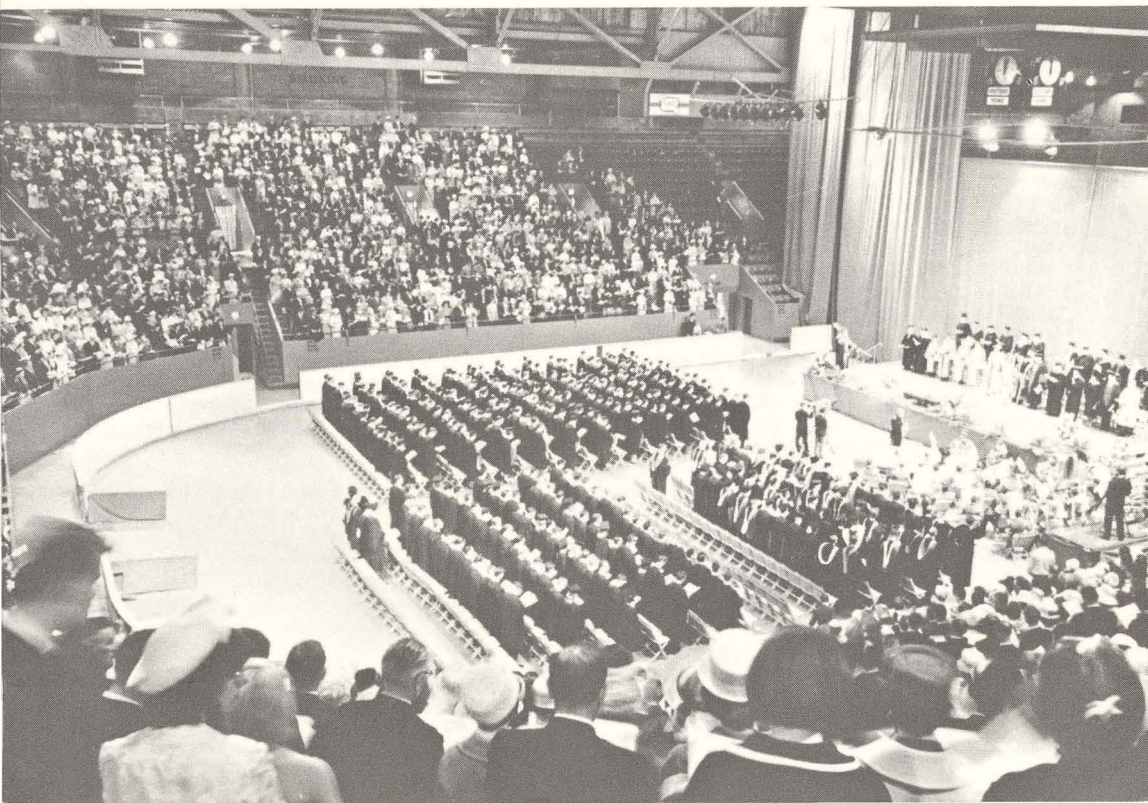
It is often said that the gap between my generation and yours is greater than any similar gap before in history. I submit that this is another of those sweeping generalities made by the ignorant or the malicious to no good purpose. It was a broad gap in the days of Pericles, and of Cicero, and it is broad today, but it **can** be bridged with good will on both sides. I suppose it is seen most vividly and most tragically in the Universities of the world. You all know that savage and bitter fights have occurred involving students and police in Paris, Berlin, Bonn, London, Rome, Milan, Tokyo, New York, and many other cities. It

has even touched our own country, and there have been some rather nasty incidents at McGill and the University of Toronto. However, we should remember that these are not entirely new. The fights between Town and Gown in Oxford and Cambridge down through the centuries are matters of record. Just the other day I happened to pick off the bookshelf of a friend the Everyman edition of J. A. Froude's "Essays in Literature and History" and, turning to his essay entitled "Words About Oxford", first published in **Fraser's Magazine** in 1850, I found this statement which contains strictures on the press, as well as on the University:

"I cannot, therefore, agree in those censures which journalism has cast upon the officers of the University, as if they encouraged, or, at all events, did not control the vicious extravagance of young men".

One cannot help thinking of President Clarke Kerr of Berkeley, or Grayson Kirk of Columbia, as one reads those lines.

Speaking for my own generation, and especially for those of us in universities, I would agree that we are in serious need of reform. Our professors, in their desire to master one facet of science or scholarship, and thus to impress their fellows, have developed a combination of myopia and tunnel-vision. They have made research into an academic religion and have branded the colleagues who devote the major portion of their time and energies to undergraduate teaching, as some kind of amiable heretics. **Of course** we need research scientists in our universities, or we shall never





learn to compete in this hyper-sophisticated world of ours, but we also need, and must recognize, the virtues of the man of broad vision and wisdom and understanding of his fellow men, and particularly of the neophytes in the academic community who look to him for guidance. The situation is serious in the natural sciences where the objective seems to be to have no undergraduate courses, and only a few Ph.D. candidates and Post-doctoral students under one's wing.

### Teachers Must Be Teachers

Utopia is, of course, achieved in the research professorship with no students at all, unlimited research grants, laboratory space, and technicians, and travel grants to attend international conferences. It is even more serious when scholars in the Social Sciences and the Humanities become imbued with this attitude and completely forsake the world of students and of teaching. I know this point of view is open to dispute, and I know that many great philosophers and even some scientists have been recluses, but let me remind you that Jesus, Socrates, Sir Isaac Newton, and Albert Einstein were in constant communication with their fellows while their greatest work was being done. You may remember the Greek Myth which tells of the battle between Hercules and Antaeus, the giant son of Gaea (the earth). So long as Antaeus kept in touch with mother earth, or kept his foot on the ground as we might say, he was invincible, but as soon as he lost touch his strength deserted him and he was overcome by Hercules. I cannot help feeling that when our professors lose touch with their students they become not only lesser men, but lesser scientists and scholars. The secret, of course, is in keeping one's balance properly, as the white king said to Alice, and we of the older generation in the universities must never forget it.

You to whom we pass the torch must keep your balance too. The Demand Society about you is making headlines every day. Teachers are demanding salary increases and a greater recognition of their professional status; trustees and departments of Education are demanding that the teachers moderate their demands, parents are demanding more kindergartens, more technical schools, more counselling services, — and lower education costs. Plumbers, electricians, and tradesman of all kinds are demanding higher wages and strict government control of prices, stockholders are demanding higher dividends, and the officers of our corporations are demanding greater productivity. Indians are demanding more funds from the federal government, and at the same time more freedom to manage their own affairs. The list of such persons is endless, and at times they all seem mad. Certainly few of them seem to have any idea of trying to maintain a proper balance in our economy or our society.

### Some Demands Sensible

Students today, or perhaps I should say a small percentage of students, are demanding that academic senates and Boards of Governors open their meetings to the public, and permit students to participate more fully in the decision-making process. Within limits I share their views. I am very happy to say that we have found it very helpful to have two Faculty members on our Board of Governors, and three students, two undergraduates and one graduate, on our Academic Council. I cannot help feeling that the students' needs and wishes are too often neglected in our Universities and Colleges today. The students often complain that their courses have too little relevance to the areas of study they are undertaking. They complain that the dependence on the lecture system is excessive, and the Macpherson Commission in the University of Toronto agrees with them. I agree too, and I hope my University and yours will do something about it.

Much of this clamour comes from minority groups who wish to **force** their views and their demands on the reluctant majority. The activists on my own campus among the Faculty and students represent, I believe, no more than about one half of one percent of the total, but their effect is out of all proportion to their size. The point is that those who are criticizing everything in the society in which they live and work are extremely vociferous, while the great majority never feel obliged to make themselves heard, and wish only to get on with their job. Perhaps what we need is a militant right to oppose the activist left.

The greatest need of all, however, not only in universities, but in the wider world which you are about to enter, is for the thinker who analyses and studies the economic, social, and political problems around him and, when he has found answers, speaks with eloquence and conviction on the ways in which reform can be achieved. From those who have the opportunity of action as well, action, of course, is required. There are many such voices now, but we need far more. We need them in our pulpits and in our press, in government at all levels, in Chambers of Commerce and Service Clubs, on school boards and welfare agencies, in community leagues and playgrounds. Ours is a great and wonderful country and it is full of wonderful people, but their merits are seen chiefly in their **individual** lives, and their virtues become blurred and obscured when they are forced into positions of activism as groups by the "demanders" of our Society.

I have said enough and I should like to leave with you in conclusion a paraphrase of a statement made by a great American President:

"Ask not what Canada can do for you, but what you can do for Canada."