

Address by Dr. Williamson 9/19/52.

Inauguration of Dr. L. T. Corlett, President
Nazarene Theological Seminary

The Nazarene Theological Seminary is no longer in the experimental period of its development. By every standard of measurement this institution has been a success. Its outstanding teaching staff has carried on in unbroken tenure from the beginning. The registration of students has gone beyond the maximum expectation of those who entertained the most sanguine hopes. It would not have been an occasion for disappointment had it taken twenty years to reach the present level of enrollment.

This amazing growth with a remarkable spirit of unity and co-operation within the organization can be ascribed to the able and efficient leadership of Dr. Hugh C. Benner. It required daring and faith for him to forego the security and joy of a pastoral ministry to identify himself with a new institution, the future of which was surrounded by many uncertainties. Nevertheless, in the spirit of abandonment which has characterized so many men who have made history in the Church of the Nazarene, Dr. Benner answered the call of the Church to become the first president of the Seminary. The choice made at that time by the General Superintendents and the Seminary Board has proved to be a wise one. When the history of the Nazarene Theological Seminary is written, the name of Hugh C.

Benner will be inscribed in capital letters. Yet in all these years no one has ever thought to speak of "Dr. Benner's Seminary". It has always been an institution of the church. It is tied more closely to the entire denomination than any other.

One of the most outstanding accomplishments of these early years has been the acceptance of the Seminary by the Church, even in the most remote and backward areas. Those who were uncertain have become confident; those passive have become enthusiastic; those reluctant have become aggressive; those negative have, for the most part, become positive.

The entire Seminary family has demonstrated great patience. They have been housed in temporary and inadequate quarters for seven years. But there has been no complaint; and the quality of work done has not been impaired. Last spring the financial campaign reached a degree of success that justified beginning construction of the Seminary building on the beautiful site of its future home. Just as his long cherished dream of occupying that new plant seemed about to be realized, Dr. Benner was called upon by the General Assembly to accept the responsibilities of the office of General Superintendent. It is not surprising that such a change of course brought its pain. He has, however, crossed that bridge with magnificent poise, and he has courageously begun what all believe will be a long and fruitful service to the Church in his new capacity.

We, therefore, are now making the first major adjustment in the history of the Seminary. We do so with the steadfast

confidence that, when God calls one man to other fields of labor, He provides a man to fill the place made vacant. That which transpires in the will of God does not do injury to any part of His work. All who see divine guidance in the choice of Dr. Benner as general superintendent, must certainly believe that another man can carry on the work he had previously done.

It is our clear conviction that Dr. L. T. Corlett is now God's man for the presidency of the Nazarene Theological Seminary. ~~Perhaps no other man could have been chosen who would have been more universally acclaimed the one most admirably adapted to the office.~~ But the time has come now for a unanimous endorsement of this man as God's choice for this important task. And with His blessing and the loyal co-operation of all concerned, we shall see the wisdom of this providence finally and fully confirmed by the results achieved.

Dr. Corlett has the necessary qualifications for this assignment. He is a man of spotless character. His personal conduct has never been questioned. He enjoys the unhesitating confidence of all who know him. He has a godlike stability of mind and purpose, and he has a Christlike spirit of devotion to the will of God and the service of the Church.

This man of our choice has the inherent characteristics of one prepared to train Nazarene preachers. He has spent his life in the home of a Nazarene minister, first that of his father and then that of his own. The love of God and of the

Church is in his blood and bones. Both as a professor and a college president he has achieved outstanding success in the preparation of young men for the ministry. Since he is to serve a preacher-training institution, this native gift is a necessity. And now we shall see his genius in this field demonstrated and increased.

Dr. Corlett is also qualified by experience and training. He has served the Church as pastor and evangelist. He has been in constant demand as a convention and campmeeting preacher. He is an author of recognized ability. For a number of years he was head of the Department of Religion at Bethany-Peniel College. For ten years he has been the successful and much-loved president of Northwest Nazarene College.

In addition to his study in Nazarene colleges and in graduate schools outside our church, he has been a constant student and a well-read man in various fields related to religious thought. While serving as president of the college in the Northwest, he was appointed to several positions which indicate that he was an approved educator in the area in which he was best known.

Dr. Corlett possesses another quality of leadership which will be most important in his new position. He has the ability to unite all the forces under his guidance and keep them working harmoniously, even when crises arise, and tensions develop for which he is not responsible. This "gift of administration" will

be put to greater test and larger use now that his leadership must enlist the co-operation and loyalty of every district in the denomination.

All these things, coupled with his clear understanding of the history, doctrine, standards, polity, purpose, and program of the Church of the Nazarene, and his unswerving loyalty to it, make Dr. L. T. Corlett the man for this position at this time.

Those of us who share responsibility for his election are convinced that under his wise guidance the new home for the Seminary will soon be ready for occupancy and will be further expanded and improved as needed. The enrollment will continue to grow from year to year until the greatest potential is achieved. The curriculum will be enriched. The quality of training will be improved. The ministry of the Church of the Nazarene will become more spiritual and more fruitful. The Church will march on to greater victory.

I commend Dr. L. T. Corlett to the trustees, the faculty, the students, and the entire Church as one of whom all nature can stand up and declare, "He is a man". He is a Christian and a scholar, a wise and experienced leader, a friend of man, and an able minister of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Corlett, I congratulate you on the honor conferred upon you, upon the great and effectual door of opportunity opened before you. Only eternity will reveal the far-reaching

possibilities of your life and leadership. In this undertaking you have the prayers, the faith, and the love of Nazarenes everywhere. May God bless you with His Spirit's anointing and guidance.

~~And now, I present to you Dr. E. F. Corlett, president-elect of the Nazarene Theological Seminary.~~