

THE NINETY-FIVE THESES

Posted In 1959 by Unknown Religionists

From a zealous desire to bring to light the truth, the following theses be maintained at Zurich under the presidency of the Rude Fr. Emil Brunner, Master of Arts, Master of Scared Theology and official reader therein. We thereupon ask all who are unable to be present and dispute with him verbally to do so in writing.

1. It is possible to be a Christian in the mid-twentieth century without having heard Calhoun's lectures.
2. Richard R. Niebuhr is the greatest American theologian since Jonathan Edwards.
3. Pelagius was a heretic—and probably a damned heretic.
4. Harry E. Fosdick has been blown about by every wind of doctrine.
5. Stronger fellowship is possible between two men from Yailanunion one of whom is not a Christian than between two Christians one and only one of whom has been to Yailanunion.
6. Some graduates of Yailanunion are Christians.
7. Duke McCall is Antichrist.
8. The chief requirement for advancement in the Southern Baptist ministry is cultivated ignorance.
9. Among the faults of the Southern Baptist Convention are: (1) it is too Southern; (2) it is too Baptist; (3) it is too conventional.
10. Negroes, being fully human, do not have souls either.
11. Brunner is the greatest theologian since Pascal.
12. Schleiermacher preferred Christianity to many other religions.
13. It cannot be demonstrated from his published works that Paul Tillich is a Hindu.
14. Southern Baptists should be loyal to their own theology as soon as they develop one.
15. R. R. Niebuhr's study of Schleiermacher is the counterpart of Paul's retreat into the wilderness.
16. Bultmann is to Newton what R. R. Niebuhr is to Einstein.
17. Nineteenth century liberal theology is the form of secular humanism that has proved most attractive to Christians.
18. H. Richard Niebuhr is a sinner too.
19. Rauschenbush was the last Christian in the Social Gospel movement.
20. The Social Gospel movement dwindled away when the only poor people left were dirty.
21. The Social Gospel was founded on the conviction that Christian faith was only for the rich and that the poor ought to be content with the things of this world.
22. Semi-pelagian theologians are more dangers to the faith than fully pelagian English teachers.
23. Indulgence in horticulture is a mortal sin for any theologian who has not attained his doctorate.
24. Despite the Index, Roman Catholics are allowed a wider range of reading than is considered quite respectable for graduates of Yailanunion.
25. Among the legalistic Pelagians of the 20th century the liberals are more learned and sophisticated than the fundamentalists.
26. If the Apostle Paul could walk the earth again, he would feel more at home in a Billy Graham meeting than in a Yailanunion seminar.
27. The first German theologian since the Reformation is Karl Barth.
28. In the nineteenth century there were many Christians outside the German universities.
29. Kierkegaard must have been very disappointed if he found any other people in heaven.
30. Reinhold Niebuhr is right in thinking that many New York Jews are as Christian as he is.
31. Saint Augustine was a greater theologian than any American liberal of the 20th century.
32. The Forward Program of Church Finance is the greatest

economic development in ecclesiastical history since the sale of indulgences in the 16th century.

33. It has recently been demonstrated that it is possible to be proud of being a Missouri Synod Lutheran.
34. The major centers of opposition in the ecumenical movement are Moscow, Rome and Nashville.
35. Mac Bryan is in Africa and all's well with the world.
36. The most significant ritual among Southern Baptists is counting each other.
37. Other schools have New Testament scholars who are not high church ecclesiastics.
38. The Home Mission Board should stay at home.
39. Professional clergymen, unless in mendicant orders, should refrain from begging at neighboring homes.
40. All snake handling should be stopped at Mercer lest the Georgia Constituency be misled.
41. Mercer Christianity professors ought to refrain from wearing at any one time: gold coat, chartrreuse trousers, purple tie and dark glasses.
42. Those members of the administration who opposed Harris for president are morally justified in denying it now.
43. Being a prophet involves more than just being mad at everybody.
44. Red-headed Yankee Christianity professors should either give us cussin' or learn how.
45. Some tithers do not become rich.
46. A good title for R. R. Niebuhr's recent book might have been Beyond Yailanunionism.
47. The chief moral problem of Atlanta Baptists is how to keep the swill out of Swilley U.
48. Only Time is giving time to Tillich.
49. Recent Directors of Religious Activities make us wonder if Polk Countians will inherit the earth.
50. Their brains are few
Their dollars too:
Who fill the pew
At Swilley U.
51. The best way to keep Swilley U. true to the Baptist principles of its founders is to prevent the study

WHERE THE MERCER 95 THESES CAME FROM

The famous Ninety-Five Theses of Mercer University appeared one fine Fall morning in 1959, posted first Luther-like on the chapel door, so the story goes, then in the lobby of the student center. Copies of the document found their way to theology departments in colleges and universities all over the country, but the authors remain unknown (though some Mercer professors are more suspect than others).

Trying to ascertain the authorship of the theses, the 1960 Cauldron noted that "attacks on various professors . . . excluded two or three very outstanding members of the Mercer theological community who, though incisive, are not verbally inspired and are not infallible in matters of faith and morals, though they speak with a Southern Mississippi twang or hail from rural western Georgia."

The Cauldron also noted that one professor who bore the brunt of several of the theses, "though not above suspicion himself as a possible author," still maintained his innocence vehemently and scoffed at the criticism as that of ravenous wolves and fundamentalists in liberals' clothing come to attack the true sheep."

Rich with gibes at aspects of modern liberal theology, Southern Baptists, and a few Mercer professors and their favorite theologians, the Theses were printed in the Cluster at the time and are reprinted here for the benefit of those who are not familiar with this bit of Merceria.

there of Bible or theology.

52. The right of every Baptist to interpret the Bible for himself ought to be extended to the study course books.
53. The Apostle Paul was not a Baptist, (I Timothy 5:23).
54. Zeb Vance has met more fine persons than anyone at Mercer.
55. Propaganda techniques of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board are more highly developed than those of the Kremlin.
56. Mercer should award an honorary E.B. degree to all members of the faculty who have completed everything but their thesis for the doctor's degrees.
57. C. S. Lewis has done more to advance the Kingdom of God in the world than H. Richard Niebuhr.
58. H. Richard Niebuhr has done more to advance Yale snobbery than C. S. Lewis.
59. Paul Tillich could have learned to speak English if he had wanted to.
60. Gandhi was less a Christian than Winston Churchill.
61. The most eminent faculty of Mercer University is the faculty of the Pharmacy School.
62. To understand Albert Schweitzer one must realize that he failed to find not only the Jesus of History but also the Christ of Faith.
63. Sophisticated atheists are more readily received into the community at Yailanunion than unsophisticated Christians.
64. Christianity professors at Mercer will not become seriously apostate as long as the supply preaching holds out.
65. The theme song of the Baptist hierarchy is "It Pays to Serve Jesus."
66. Mercer is the only college in the United States in which economics and home economics are combined in the same department.
67. Tithing is a device by which rich Pharisees prey on poor Pharisees.
68. Mercer should sponsor a dance every Saturday night in the square donut.
69. It is impossible to preserve a genuine congregational polity in a church with more than 1000 members.
70. Bankers' sons who become theologians are likely to have their ethics perverted by guilt complexes.
71. The Kingdom of Heaven will never be bought by Religious Focus hocus pocus.
72. Mercer could win nationwide recognition by admitting Negroes.
73. The theme song of the Sunday School Board is "Just as I Am."

74. Some common denominators brings Southern Baptist, Missouri Synod Lutherans and Roman Catholics together in opposition to the ecumenical movement.

75. We ought to take Gandhi at his word when he says he is not a Christian.

76. It takes more than a diaper and a nanny-goat to make a saint.

77. The Christianity Department should offer one course in which Dr. Cauthen tells what HE thinks.

78. One of the ethics professors in the Christianity Department is said to practice Yoga.

79. The greatest achievement of Martin Luther was think up ninety-five theses.

80. Coach Smith has made a greater contribution to the religion committee than anyone had hoped for.

81. It is doubtful that Coach Smith could have done it if Hayden Bryant had not helped him.

82. The theme song of the Mercer faculty is "Standing on the Promises."

83. P. Harris Anderson is Mercer's best hope for capturing the sword drill championship of the G.B.C.

84. A confessional theologian is one who witnesses "What H. Richard Niebuhr has done for me."

85. When God said "multiply and replenish the earth, he did not say multiply by 5.

86. Some ministerial students would do better if they postponed marriage and burned the midnight oil.

87. Foolish virgins don't last.

88. The most honored eleemosynary institution of Georgia Baptists is Mercer University.

89. Getting rid of B. Joseph Martin was not worth what it cost Mercer.

90. There have been at least three senators in American history who accomplished less than Herman Talmadge.

91. Most of the white people involved in racial mixing have been segregationists.

92. Southerners are the only white Americans who are afraid they would marry Negroes if law did not prevent it.

93. The law being what it is, we must grant the Negro equality before we can put him in his place.

94. College professors who plant thickets express a subconscious desire to hang by their tails.

95. In the last year no one has done more to promote Christian education at Mercer than former dean Malcolm Lester.

LITTLE MAN ON CAMPUS

