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Letters to the editor are published if signed. Signer's name can be withheld for legitimate reasons.

Late Students Disturb Chapel

Once one conceited friend told his ally the proper way to enter a room full of people. Open the door; stand at the threshold and when all eyes are upon you, make a grand entrance.

It seems as if his advice has been adopted by many members of the Mercer family, students and faculty alike. Especially was this true in last Friday's chapel session. Students and faculty were still coming in some seven or eight minutes after the bell had rung.

Their tardiness is especially discourteous to the speaker who has enough difficulty in gaining and maintaining the students' interest without the entrance of some cute freshman, so innocent appearing, naive, bland in her guilt. Tardiness shows a disrespect for what the speaker has to say; it seems to be another way of expression, "I don't give a hoot about what you have to say, but I'm required to be here, so here I am."

Their lateness is disturbing to their fellow students who might have an interest in what a speaker has to say. The slamming of the doors at the front of the chapel and the grand entrance of some smartly dressed student is quite naturally going to steal the attention of the students from the speaker.

Third, students are hurting themselves by not cultivating the habits of punctuality.

Ten minutes are allowed from the end of second period to the beginning of chapel at ten. This gives students enough time to move from any place on campus, including the ROTC departments, to the chapel, if they move with a fast clip.

Loitering outside the chapel with friends until one minute til ten is not necessary. It is rather doubtful that any will fall dead during the 30 minute chapel program so that you will never see them again.

When the clock in Willingham Chapel strikes ten, students and faculty should be in their seats, through with their conversations, ready for chapel to begin.

When the chapel bell sounds, the chapel checkers begin listing the empty seats. A student who is two or three minutes late is already counted absent by the time he reaches his assigned seat. The checkers do not mark those absent when they first check the seats present after they come in late.

We suggest for the sake of the speakers and fellow students that both Mercer students and faculty who are late either cut chapel for the day, or if they have a special interest in the program, enter from the back and fill a convenient empty seat or sit on the chapel steps.

Do anything but disturb those faculty and students who cared enough to arrive at the chapel on time.

Lectures Institutional At MU

Again this week the Mercer family has profited from the legacy left by Mrs. Eugenia Dorothy Blount Lamar "to provide lecturers of the very highest type of scholarship which will aid in the permanent preservation of the values of Southern culture, history and literature." Mrs. Lamar passed away several years ago, yet her name is perpetuated by her thoughtfulness in willing this legacy to Mercer so that we as students might have the contact with those who are authorities on Southern civilization. The care which the Lamar committee has exercised in selecting the fall lecturers has truly made the Lamar Lectures an institution on our campus.

Student Devotionals Are Refreshing and Stimulating

It is good to have an occasional Wednesday devotional in chapel led by members of the student body. Wednesday's program was an outstanding example of what students are capable of doing.

Young people are in a position to appreciate the problems and situations confronting college students. Often older speakers do not have the clear perspective that young people possess.

And then too there's an element in a student-conducted chapel program that's missing in others. It's something out of the ordinary when students are willing to put time and effort into a religious-type of program. To see students express their convictions, their beliefs and their ideas tends to bring out a responsive chord in their fellow students.

We do not mean to intimate that all Wednesday programs should be conducted by the students; no, there are important gains from having adult speakers. They have the maturity, probably a greater degree of wisdom and more experience than the student. We need their guidance and their suggestions.

At the same time it is refreshing and stimulating to have an occasional student-conducted Wednesday devotional.

Dr. Lewis Batts

Role Of Chapel At Mercer



As to chapel at Mercer, I view it as an integral part of the educational program of the college. It is neither vestige nor relic. It is not a token, ritualistic acknowledgement of religion. It is not an arbitrary imposition on the student body by the faculty, or the trustees, or the administration or the Baptists of Georgia.

Chapel at Mercer is one of a number of basic services included in the effort to build a contemporary and well-rounded program of Christian education.

I think chapel at Mercer should be educational, devotional and pleasant. It should be many experiences that, in their accumulation, students will like to remember lifelong from their Mercer days.

This is chapel in theory, and I know that in actual practice it is inevitable less. Less, that is, on many occasions. This lag of practice behind theory is the specific area of effort for those of us who are responsible for the chapel programs.

Exclusive of the student assembly on Tuesday, which is conducted by the Student Government Association, there are two weekly meetings which constitute the Mercer chapel.

At the present time the Wednesday meeting is generally a devotional service, the chief purpose being divine worship. By means of prayer, hymn, anthem, meditation and organ we endeavor to call the entire college community to a brief midweek experience of worship. "At the heart of the week" it lies "at the heart of our noblest efforts."

The Friday programs are intended to be varied both in theme and in method of presentation. It is important that something happen and that it happen attractively and effectively. The year through we try to have drama, debate, music, and public addresses on vital themes. We hope sometime to use a screen for projection but we have at present no means for darkening the room.

One of the things we keep in mind to do it to have more students in our programs. Another to bring men and women of accomplishment to present to us their particular field of human service.

We are willing to be a little experimental too. It would be helpful to discover new resources for program and I invite everyone's suggestion.

My final word is appreciation for every student who has contributed interest, cooperation and courtesy. There is a delicate relation between program and audience which, if maintained, can bring credit and deep satisfaction to all of us. As I rely upon your cooperation, I pledge you my own.

Why Rake Leaves?

by rithia mcglaun

I can't think of any one profound to quote or paraphrase or steal from. In such event I resort to a question. Why do people rake leaves?

It may be to do battle against the encroachments of nature upon a gardener's sense of orderliness or to remove remainders that there is a cycle which inevitably involves death or change. People also rake leaves because they are bored or retired or to avoid washing windows.

People do not rake leaves because they have not thought of it or have something else to do or like leaves on the ground. Some combine indolence with preferring fallen leaves. And what is comparable to heaps and irregular piles of leather-dry leaves to amble through?

ED'S NOTE: Maybe columnist McGlaun will discuss the medieval problem of how many angles can stand on the head of a pin in her next week's column.



JOHN WEATHERLY

Down The Drain?

The faculty members who have initiated and maintained the program of religious activities involving the visit of Dr. Katz and other outstanding scholars to the campus are now questioning whether or not such a program should be continued. They are imbittered with the poor turnout of students to his Thursday night address. After "great expenditure of time, effort and money on their part," students who had "committed themselves to the program through their participation in the discussion groups" now refused to assume the responsibility to turn out for Dr. Katz "because he uh, uh'ed here and there in his speech."

I'd like to extend the criticism of the program beyond the obvious faults of the students, who seem to be unwilling to turn out for a truly articulate scholar as Dr. Williams, to the program itself. I'm not sure of any sure-fire cure for student apathy. But I would suggest that the rest of this year be spent developing a core group of students who will feel an allegiance to the program and be willing to bear some of the burden of its support. Could you really expect, given our situation, a corporate responsibility on the part of the members of the last groups, many of whom never knew each other and who could not come to do so in the grand total of three meetings in preparation?

I understand a change of pace is planned for the winter quarter in the form of a preaching mission. And there is the possibility of a retreat in the spring quarter on Christian drama. But come next fall, should the regular program be renewed? I think so if the faculty involved are willing to undergo some self-criticism of the program.

If the Faculty Christian Fellowship obtains a core group of students really committed to the program, then I feel they owe this group for their efforts a scholar who has some sense of the "intellectual development" of the undergraduate and who is both willing and capable of clearly articulating his ideas. This is especially necessary if the man is to have any impact on the students not participating actively in the discussion groups.

There is a counter-criticism to this. In a program such as this concerned with the student's "vocation as a student" and with the relevance of the Christian faith to the various academic disciplines we cannot expect to find many really articulate men competent in this field.

Then why cling so tenaciously to a program which allows men to speak only of the relevance of the Christian faith to some particular discipline? Aren't there other subjects or areas with which a scholar can deal adequately? But perhaps the program as it stands is too holy, too ideal, to undergo alteration to fit the situation.

These professors will charge that I advocate a return to the religious focus week approach with its over-accommodation of the material covered toward the student. (Dr. Glover caught me as an unaware freshman enjoying a religious focus week and has never forgiven me.) Having taken for themselves one extreme, they assume I will take the other extreme. I haven't.

On the whole I like the program if it is workable. I have seen it come close to succeeding in the visit of Richard Niebuhr. None of a man's intellectual challenge is removed when what he has to say is clearly stated; rather it is made available.