CHANGES LOOM ON HORIZON

In 1941, I received a letter from Mr. Paul Hanawalt saying that Dr. Edward H. Todd was going to retire at the College of Puget Sound, that the committee was in the process of securing names of people who might be his successor and that my name had been suggested to them and would I be interested. It was a most interesting letter, because I had been invited to come back to Ohio Wesleyan University at Delaware, Ohio, as a dean of the University. I had gone back and been interviewed by President Burgstahler, who had been a very successful president at Cornell College in Iowa before being installed as president of Ohio Wesleyan. President Burgstahler was known as a very aggressive individual and an excellent person in the raising of money.

I spent considerable time at Ohio Wesleyan because it is one of the great Methodist schools and I was very much impressed. President Burgstahler definitely offered me the position and wanted me to come in the fall of 1942. I held off making a decision and told him I needed time to evaluate the situation because of the situation at Puget Sound.

When I returned to the campus from Ohio (where I was offered the position, I found the Willamette campus in turmoil. It had been the time for registration for the draft and Dr. Knopf, who was an ordained clergyman as well as a professor of anthropology, had registered in the armory in Salem. When he went to register, he said that on general principles he wanted to register as a conscientious objector. It appeared the fates were against him because he had a lady who was very vocal and who shouted out to the director
of registration, "I've got this here kook who wants to register as a con-
scientious objector." Well, of course, a sudden silence fell over the entire
armory and the director came over and said, "What did you say?" She re-
peated, "This man wants to register as a conscientious objector." Dr. Knopf
said yes, he did; he wanted to register as a conscientious objector against
war. Well, it was picked up by the media—by radio and his picture was on
the front page of the Salem paper: "President of Willamette registers as
Conscientious Objector" and tensions were exceedingly high and emotions
were very, very high. Mr. Paul Wallace, who was President of the Board
of Trustees at Willamette, took me to lunch and said, "Franklin, do everything
you possibly can to keep things calm on the campus." The newsmen attended
every speech that Knopf gave and it appeared that things were not getting
better.

In the meantime, Dr. Knopf decided that compulsory chapel was not
necessary, and in one fell swoop, without saying anything to anyone about
it, announced that chapel would not be compulsory any longer. He told me,
personally, that he felt that he could make the speeches so interesting that
the students would flock in and the townspeople would, too, and for that
reason chapel need not be compulsory. I strongly advised against it, but it
was already too late because he had made the announcement.

In great trepidation, I went to chapel the first time it was voluntary,
and where there had been 400 attending before, there were about eight or
ten people scattered over the place. It was an utter fiasco. The second time
it was the same way, and the third time the same way.
Again, without saying anything, the college newspaper announced, "Chapel again Compulsory" and that at every twenty-fifth seat would be a faculty member to be monitor and take attendance! The faculty had not been attending for a long time and, naturally, this was a great irritant. The head of the history department, Dr. Ivan Lovell, asked for a meeting of the faculty and it was called. He proved himself to be the devil's advocate, making many unusual charges against Dr. Knopf, one of which was that he was trying to control the private lives of the faculty and kindred other accusations. It was the most difficult meeting I have ever attended, and ended without any of the problems being solved and everyone being greatly agitated. Mr. Wallace again took me to lunch and said, "Franklin, hold steady. It appears that Dr. Knopf will be going back to teaching, and if he does, we would like the possibility of asking you to continue in his place."

At the same time, I had been invited to come to Puget Sound to speak before the chapel. I arrived, and Mr. Blaine, who was Chairman of the Board, was there and Dr. Todd, who was most gracious, was there; Mr. Hanawalt was there; Mr. Kilworth was there—all of them trustees—and we were to march in to the chapel where I was to speak. I recall that one of the fraternities had a great, big dog, a Saint Bernard, and it walked past us up the aisle, across the chapel platform, and I heard one student say, "Good Lord, there is another candidate for the presidency!"

Just as we were about to go in the door of the chapel, Dr. Todd, who was on my right, said, "Oh, Dr. Thompson, I just received a communication
from Nashville, Tennessee, today asking me to make a very strong plea for young people to enter the ministry. Inasmuch as you are a minister, I wonder if you could do that this morning?" Naturally, I had spent a great deal of time working on my speech so it would be just exactly as I wanted it, and I thanked him for the suggestion but thought perhaps that might come at a later time and I did not do it. The speech seemingly went well before the students; they were very receptive and very fine and I enjoyed it very much.

I returned to Salem afterward. Again Mr. Wallace and the trustees were saying that they hoped we might give some consideration to remaining at Willamette. There were a number of meetings of the board of trustees at the College of Puget Sound. Bishop Baxter attended those when he could and when time would allow, and I went to Portland a time or two to talk to him about it and for his analysis of the situation. He always said, "Frank, don't count on it, because there are people who are older and more experienced than you in the picture."

I found out that it finally came down between a Dr. Niles and myself. Dr. Niles was president of one of the Methodist colleges in Iowa and he had brought an outside organization in and had raised $100,000 the year before, although a considerable amount of it had been spent in the process of raising the money. The fact that he was an experienced administrator and a man who had some success in raising money against a young person who was only four years into college work made it appear that Dr. Niles was to be appointed the president of the College of Puget Sound.
However, a few weeks later, I received a telephone call from Mr. E. L. Blaine, asking if it would be possible for him and Mr. Dix Rowland to come down and confer with Lucille and myself in Salem. They wanted to come down on a Saturday and return on a Sunday. I told them we would be most pleased to see them; if they came down on Saturday we would have dinner together. I also mentioned the fact that I was preaching in Corvallis because the minister who was also a colonel had been called up to active service. (I was vice president of Willamette and minister preaching in Corvallis at a church of about 900 members, about 400 being from Oregon State College.) They said they would be happy to come down and talk with us and then go to church with us if I would take them to Portland so they could catch the train back to Tacoma-Seattle that afternoon.

As soon as I hung up from the telephone call, I called Bishop Baxter and asked him if he knew anything about this and what I should expect. He hesitated a little bit and then he said, "Of course, you know what to expect, Frank. They are going to offer you Puget Sound." Lucille and I were involved in deciding on what to do about Ohio Wesleyan, which would be much closer home and which already had an outstanding reputation as one of the great Methodist schools and colleges. We had the somewhat unusual option of being able to stay at Willamette, if we decided to do so, although we knew full well that there would be rather unusual faculty resistance and we would have some very troubled waters because of the Knopf administrative situation.
When they came, they did offer us the position and we told them we would accept! We took them with us to Corvallis, Oregon, where we had a very fine congregation, and then immediately we left to drive them to Portland to catch the train. On the way to Portland, they got into a very heated argument and it was rather interesting to both Lucille and myself because they were intense in their difference of opinion and I had some second thoughts, wondering whether we ought to go into such a situation with the chairman of the board and the attorney and more or less chairman of the finance committee, but both men proved to be very wonderful friends and most dedicated to the College of Puget Sound.

After we had accepted at Puget Sound, I had to go to the hospital to have my tonsils out, and the second day Lucille came and told me that Dr. Knopf had died suddenly of a heart attack. It was one of the most tragic experiences, because I never saw a man suffer so much for his principles and for his beliefs as Carl Knopf. It was a mistake that he came in the first place, because he was an internationally known scholar, but his lack of administrative ability was most unfortunate.

I advised Dr. Burgstahler that I was coming to Puget Sound and, therefore, could not take the deanship at Ohio Wesleyan; and I had several long talks with Paul Wallace, Chairman of the Board at Willamette, and advised him that I thought it would be better to start anew than to be involved in the situation in which there might be certain personal prejudices
before I started. He was one of the most wonderful men I knew and he agreed.

In July of 1942, we left Salem for Tacoma and the University of Puget Sound!
TACOMA AND THE UNIVERSITY OF PUGET SOUND

In Tacoma we rented a house at 3001 North Union where we lived for several years. It was very difficult to find a house in which to live because of the heavy influx of people to Tacoma to be a part of the war industries. There were 27,000 people working in the shipyards, building ships for war transportation, as well as people working for Boeing in the airplane industry and those in the four branches of the service which had installations nearby.

Tacoma was a most interesting place. It was large enough to live an individual life and yet small enough so that it did not take too long to get to know the leaders of the community. It was interesting to meet the Mayor, Harry Cain, who was very congenial to the University of Puget Sound and on many occasions asked me to be a part of the civic meetings. Also, it was very interesting to be a part of the Chamber of Commerce and to be a member of Rotary. Dr. Todd was particularly anxious that I become a member of Rotary because it had such a fine relationship through the years and he felt that it was a very real part of the relationship between the "town and gown". Dr. Milton Marcy, whom I had known in the Oregon Conference and whose daughter had been in my class at Willamette, was minister of First Methodist Church and he did much to help me get acquainted with the ministers of the Conference and the religious leaders of the community.

It was interesting to make many speeches in the early days of my coming to the College, particularly at the high school honors assemblies, high school commencements, Seattle Rotary, Seattle Sunshine Club, Women's University
League and many other places. It was a great opportunity to tell the story of the College of Puget Sound to very congenial and interested audiences. I think it did much to start us on a new public relations development.

The Board of Trustees set up a committee to deal with the installation of the new president and it was headed by Dr. Jaeger. In conference with several of the Trustees and also in conference with the faculty, we discussed the possibility of the inauguration. Inasmuch as there was very restricted travel on account of the War and also because of limited funds available, I suggested that the inauguration be low-key and that it be in conjunction with the commencement of May 1943. This was done and we asked for greetings from our sister universities but because of the travel limitations suggested that they did not feel that they needed to send representatives.

The enrollment at the College was very low because so many men had gone into the service. We had approximately 300 students, of whom 45 were men, mostly people with a classification of 4-F or who were in very specialized jobs in the shipyards or a like service. Because of the difficulties of the fraternities, which had been rather strong and which now had very few members, we called a meeting of the students and talked with them and decided that we would put all the fraternity men into one fraternity called Alpha Chi Omega (the beginning and the end). This maintained the fraternity spirit on the campus during the War and we carefully managed the houses which they owned, rented them and got the income for them while the men were away.
One of the organizations that Dr. Todd had particularly liked was the Order of the Patrons and Founders. This was an Order conferred upon individuals for unusual service to the College. Upon his retirement, we conferred this Order on Dr. Todd because of his long and unusual service and his complete dedication to the College. At the first commencement after his retirement, it was my recommendation that we confer an honorary doctor's degree on him because of the fact that he was aging and I wanted it to come to him while it had real meaning to him. We also conferred an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters on Bishop Baxter, who was the resident bishop for the area at that time.