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Can Science and Religion Mix?

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CAN SCIENCE AND

Robert Mohr and Denny McHenry greet the Reverend Father LeRoy Burroughs as they leave St. John's Episcopal Church.
RELIGION on the Iowa State campus is more than a matter of attending church on Sundays. Look deep into the thoughts of that aproned chemistry student who is memorizing formulas for his flow sheet. Look beyond the cherry pie making procedures of the uniformed foods student. They know more than their chemistry equations or pie recipes. They're developing ideas on what they want in life and religion. Their discussions are centered on ideas that go deeper than next weekend's date and last week's bull session with the fellows in the dorm. Most of these ideas don't come out in ordinary conversations. But they're there just the same.

Iowa State students have a larger barrier to overcome in getting a workable religion for themselves than do liberal arts students. Drilled in the scientific approach in the classroom, students learn to deal almost entirely with facts and conclusions. When they are confronted with the abstract ideas and philosophies of religion, many flounder.

When the Rev. William Alexander was on the campus for Religion in Life Week, he presented a down-to-earth, honest view of religion. Students reacted positively. Long sessions and informal discussions may have started with ideas of what to do on a date, but before long they brought out basic religious ideas on a plane the students understood.

Down underneath the scientific crust, students want to know the useful ideas that deal with God and what's right and wrong, not the vague words of puzzling theologians. Religion to Iowa State students is not a matter of memorization and repetition. Here's where young men and women run up against problems—how to work most of the day with scientific books, facts and lists and still accept religion. They may question the ideas behind religion, but they are looking for an application of it.

Because of their scientific approach to religion, Iowa State students who attend religious youth conferences with liberal art students have difficulty many times in expressing their religious views. During Religion in Life Week, one young man left a vitally interesting discussion of Christian ethics and their relation to everyday living because he had to catch up on physics.

A science student's ability to get along in religion consists first of dealing with science in the laboratory and finding an answer there. But while you can't measure religion with a test tube, it can be tested in its own field. Science gives answers as far as laboratory experiments go. Religion shows how to live with people. The answer to the science of living with people comes from trying it. One scientist said, "The teachings of Christ are as great a social truth as the law of gravity is a scientific one." Failures of religion aren't due to religious principles, but to the fact that we don't live the kind of religion that we would like to live.

One God

A scientifically minded student can do two things: he may decide that everyone else is ignorant because others don't know as much as he does, or he may integrate religion and science and realize that there are things outside the physical sciences that he needs to know. In this sense, science and religion are related. The idea of one God was as great a scientific discovery as it was a religious one. People's disbelief in pagan religions—rain and nature gods—furthered science as much as it did religion. The two can exist together. They can exist together at Iowa State.

A Working Religion

And the test for religion? There's no cut and dried formula. To be good it's got to work. Try religion in its own field with its own laws to follow. God has basic laws—science is one of them. Any community or college atmosphere where the Golden Rule is tried, will become better. A religion that works is found not only in the Bible, but in social relationships too.

Faculty members and local ministers report that the scientifically minded students here attend church in much larger numbers than at other school in the country. Students as a whole attend church with open minds and are more responsive to pleas which many adults consider unimportant. One minister, after giving a sermon on mission funds, found that the adults responded as they always had, but the
Religion as applied to daily living is the topic of many involved college bull sessions. Students gave a greater percent of their money to benevolences following the sermon.

On the Iowa State campus no one has to apologize for being a Christian. Through the years, there has been a religious tradition of Christian relationships among students and faculty. Most of Iowa State's presidents have been either ordained ministers or sons of ministers. The faculty is active in church work; many are Sunday School teachers and others are church officers and serve on religious committees. Iowa State is the only land grant college with a Department of Religious Education. Eight different courses are offered and each year 200 students elect them.

Religion is vital to many students at Iowa State. But it could be an influence on more if each student would take advantage of the opportunities offered in Ames and on the campus. There are always those who say, "Where is religion?" They make up their minds there is nothing to religion, that it can't be found at Iowa State. Some colleges have compulsory chapel services, but chapel programs never accomplish the real purpose of religion; they only strengthen it. Take a good look around you—there are places where a working religion can be found in this school.

Sunday night vesper programs on campus offer students an opportunity to hear outstanding international as well as religious speakers. The fact that Iowa State students lack time or appreciation for campus lecturers was shown when only 400 heard Dr. T. Z. Koo, famed Chinese authority, speak last quarter. The fault probably lies not with the student, but with his time-consuming courses. They fail to give him time to THINK, either about international problems or any religious ideas.

The varied denominational programs offered by Ames churches show their concern for Iowa State students. The chance to broaden your religious outlook is available in church programs which will not be there after graduation. At young people's meetings on Sunday evenings, those in charge may be bothered by the small attendance; but numbers don't matter—the few who are there may lead thousands.

YWCA and YMCA programs offer a large number of activities during the week which act as an outlet for both physical activity and service. The leaders in these organizations make great contributions because they are strong leaders. Projects ranging from knitting for French underprivileged children to managing a Saturday nursery school, interest members of the Service Group. Firesides, informal "knit and chat" groups and music groups offer a chance for wholesome fellowship and discussion.

During Religion in Life Week, morning chapel services were held in South Ballroom, Memorial Union, and each morning at 7:30 the ballroom was packed. This indicates that students are definitely interested in religion. Since January, chapel services have been held every Tuesday morning in South Ballroom.

The morals of a family are as high as the morals of the women in the family. The trained home economist should be more than an expert in her field. She should be an expert in getting along with people, and she should make an excellent homemaker. Maybe you say you haven't formulated the plans for your religion, but in a few years you may be laying the foundation for the religion of your children. It's time you decided on something.

Iowa State has a religious background, steeped in the philosophies of religious men. The opportunities for forming a deep and sincere religion, a religion which is a way of life, are open to you as a student of Iowa State. What are you going to do about it?