

# William David Turkington

## An Appreciation

Frank Bateman Stanger

William David Turkington is a good man. The Psalmist, in immortal words, describes such as he:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.

Like Nathanael, here is a man "in whom is no guile." Like Barnabas, he is truly "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith."

William David Turkington is a man with whom friendship is an exhilarating and inspiring experience. It has been my high privilege to have enjoyed friendship with Dean Turkington on various levels of relationship. As his student in Asbury College I sensed continually that his warm and concerned heart would permit no professional barriers to be erected between him and any student who desired to bask in the sunshine on his friendship.

As an alumnus of the institutions in which he continued to serve, I was conscious of his continuing personal concern for me and my ministry, across the miles and the years. And more recently, as his administrative colleague, I have warmed my heart increasingly at the fire of his magnanimous friendship.

His friendship is truly an exhilarating and inspiring experience. To be in his presence is to be awed by the dignity and graciousness of a truly Christian gentlemen. To share in fellowship with him is to garner an ever-enlarging harvest of wisdom and joy. To participate in the beautiful hospitality of his home is a benediction to one's soul and life.

William David Turkington is a practical man. In fact, he is an extremely practical man. He is more concerned with action and practice than with mere thought and theory. He continually lays hold upon that which is useful and fit for actual practice. Thus he is always and everywhere a man of good sense.

To hear him expound his theology is to sense the atmosphere of the laboratory rather than that of the cloister. In his academic labors he is most at home in the field of ethics and of practical living. In his proclamation of the doctrine of perfect love he is dogmatic in the area of love rather than at the point of perfection.

His spiritual practicality manifests itself in attractive graces of heart and life. He is an incarnation of Christian love. Those who know him intimately, understand some of the personal and professional heartaches that he has been forced to endure because of the occasional smallnesses and prejudices of some who should have acted differently toward him. But in all of this love has shone forth from the depths of his personality. Such love has suffered long, is kind, has not been easily provoked, does not think in terms of any retaliation, and has never rejoiced in the wrong.

William David Turkington is a faithful man. His faith is revealed in his faithfulness. He is devoted, constant, loyal, conscientious. Truly, the just man lives by his faithfulness.

In these lines I am thinking primarily of his faithfulness to Asbury Theological Seminary. He is faithful in his intercessions on behalf of the institution which he loves so much and has served so long. How often I have heard him pray for the Seminary. He often reminds God that this institution is truly "a vine of His own planting." He beseeches God for vision and wisdom and resources that the work of the Seminary might prosper increasingly.

He is faithful in his devotion to duty. It was years before he could be persuaded to take a full vacation period. He has accepted the continuing routine of his administrative duties

without murmuring or complaint and has been available and accessible even to "the friend who calls at midnight."

Such faithfulness has made him a steadying influence at the very heart of the life of the Seminary through the years. It is often remarked that his tenure has perhaps been the chief source of administrative unity at the Seminary. He never sought administrative power, but he was always ready to place a steadying hand upon the institutional helm when this was needed. In times of stress he has spoken the word of faith and hope. In periods of distress he has been enabled to exercise an administrative ministry of encouragement and inspiration. We are truly the inheritors of his judicious and gracious dealings with problems and personalities.

William David Turkington is a man of beneficent and abiding influence. His colleagues across the years speak of him in terms of appreciation and personal obligation. A host of alumni will always think of him as "Mr. Asbury" with ever-deepening affection. Students will continue to cherish his friendship and prize his counsel.

His formal retirement from active administrative duty will in no way diminish the influence of his leadership and the inspiration of his life. The service which he has already rendered and will continue to render, in a retired relation, will ever be "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God."

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It is my high privilege to salute William David Turkington-- a good man, a man of inspiring friendship, a practical man, a faithful man, a man of ever-increasing influence. On behalf of his administrative colleagues, his fellow faculty members, the staff and students, the alumni of Asbury Theological Seminary, I congratulate him upon a life magnificently lived, a task well performed, and a future much deserved. It is our prayer that he will find his days of retirement golden with happy memories and with new opportunities for the enjoyment of abundant living.