

ARTHUR H. COMPTON  
RYERSON PHYSICAL LABORATORY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

January 12, 1939.

Dear Dr. Brittain:

Thoughtful observers of the American scene seem to agree that the greatest danger to our democracy is the possibility of its "breaking up into self-conscious mutually antagonistic minorities," to use a phrase of George N. Shuster, a Catholic writer. The most widespread misunderstandings and antagonisms have to do with religious differences. It was my recognition of the national importance of securing better understanding and cooperation among people of all faiths, which persuaded me recently to accept the Protestant Co-chairmanship of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, an office previously held by the late Honorable Newton D. Baker.

The National Conference wishes to persuade American college students of the necessity of understanding and cooperation among Catholics, Jews and Protestants and to assist them to a fuller appreciation of the distinctive contributions to American culture which the various racial and religious groups are making. In the development of this program, I earnestly hope to have your cooperation and suggestions.

It will greatly assist our office if you will write to me in answer to the following questions: First, what is the situation on your campus with regard to the relationship of Catholics, Jews and Protestants? Second, in what respects would the religious workers on your campus and the instructors of courses in religion cooperate in educating for better intergroup relationships in America? Third, would your institution be willing to experiment with a student and faculty "Round Table" in which a program of interfaith fellowship, discussions and public meetings might be developed?

May I urge that you designate some faculty member or committee to consider what can be done on your campus? It would be helpful if you would furnish the name of the faculty member who should receive the publicity and program materials which will be released from time to time by the National Conference office. Our staff stands ready to advise with your committee both with regard to organization and program.

I trust that you will indicate your willingness to cooperate.

Yours very truly,

*Arthur H. Compton*

Dr. W. H. Brittain,  
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