



CHAPLAINS AT THE HOGG FOUNDATION

By BERT KRUGER SMITH

This account of a popular seminar for Air Force chaplains comes from the Director of Mental Health Information Services of the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health of the University of Texas. . . . The story appears here at the suggestion of Richard B. Hughes, who wrote to say: "Many chaplains would join me in saying their month in Austin was one of the most profitable they have ever spent. I regard the Hogg Foundation experiment as a bold new idea in post-seminary education."

THE seminar idea was born during the summer of 1955 when Chaplain (Major General) Charles I. Carpenter, then Chief of Chaplains of the United States Air Force, and his staff analyzed a full year's

data on counseling problems which had been submitted by chaplains throughout the Air Force. They discovered that at least half of the problems reported involved marriage and family difficulties. How

could they help chaplains gain new skills in this important area?

It was decided that a solid educational approach to the problem of human relations was necessary. After checking possibilities, Chaplain Carpenter decided to ask the Hogg Foundation to assist in planning such a training course.

Several days later in Austin, Texas, the telephone rang, and Chaplain Carpenter presented his idea to Dr. Bernice Milburn Moore (second from left in the picture shown), who heads the Foundation's work in national, state, and community service. She conferred with Dr. Robert L. Sutherland, director of the Foundation, and together they started investigating the opportunities for producing a series of seminars on the University of Texas campus.

Although the Hogg Foundation, since its inception in 1940, had been involved in many community-wide mental health programs, it had never undertaken a project with such broad implications as that proposed by Chaplain Carpenter. However, Dr. Sutherland and Dr. Moore immediately saw the possibilities, both for the staff in the behavioral sciences in the University and for the chaplains, in sharing in this type of seminar activity. Drawing from the faculty and other specialties, they began to prepare for an influx of 120 chaplains, thirty at a time, for four one-month seminars the first year. In October 1956 the first session began.

The chaplains who took the course represented practically all the major Protestant denominations. Members of the first four seminars were selected from air commands serving in forty countries of the world.

Before the first group of chaplains arrived, the seminar staff read and studied thumbnail sketches of counseling problems or situations which had been written by prospective participants from their own experiences and sent in through the Office of the Chief of Air Force Chaplains.

Members of the seminar staff felt that the social and behavioral sciences had much to contribute to stability in marriage and to improvement in human relations. They recognized that in the majority of cases, knowledge about human relations is paying dividends nationally in more stable marriages. The divorce rate for 1958 was half of that in 1948; the middle-income group is having more children than formerly; and couples are seeking professional help when their marriages get in trouble.

As an integral part of the University of Texas, the Foundation enlisted the help of faculty members who could bring the findings of basic sciences to bear on the problems of human behavior with special reference to marriage and family life. They came from the departments of psychology, sociology, and educational psychology. Dr. Glenn Ramsey, clinical psychologist, was

invited to become associate to Dr. Moore, director of the seminars. Clergymen, physicians, and psychiatrists were also called to assist. Role playing, group projects, and dramatized radio discussions were utilized, in addition to discussion groups and lecture sessions.

Some of the chaplains, recalling their own college and seminary work, expected the seminar to be a lecture course. Instead, new methods were utilized. The objective was to help each man acquire a better understanding of himself, the problems he faced, and the people he was going to serve.

Scientific research and clinical findings furnished the theoretical background for practical application to counseling problems. Counseling methods were reviewed and highlighted, mainly to show their relevance to the work of chaplains. Problem inventories were discussed, and actual problems were often acted out, with the chaplains themselves sometimes taking the part of the counselor or of a distraught wife or disgruntled airman.

The operation of the seminars might be seen by stepping into a large room in the Texas Union Building and viewing a typical afternoon session. The chaplains, in slacks and sport shirts, are seated around a hollow U-shaped square table. A role-playing demonstration has just been concluded in the open center of the square. Ralph and Janet, with their mythical marriage and just-as-mythical two children,

have quarreled with each other in a nagging manner in which each has demonstrated his boredom with marriage, with life, and with each other. In this role-playing scene each has gone to a chaplain for counseling.

As the role playing ends, Dr. Robert Blake, psychologist, encourages group discussion from the chaplains. They begin a problem-solving process. For fifteen minutes they express themselves—a chaplain commenting on Janet's quick tears, another expressing the idea that Ralph may be too immature for marriage, and still another saying that their lack of educational background makes them fair game for such troubles. One chaplain notes that neither Ralph nor Janet goes to church.

Dr. Moore has been listening as the chaplains talk. In her comments she calls to their attention some of the possible reasons behind the behavior depicted. From time to time she refers to clinical or research studies that deal with such dynamics of behavior as have been witnessed. She also relates this session to the opening comments of Dr. Blake by explaining that chaplains need to encourage couples to work on their own problems in order to become involved in solving them.

Following her comments, Dr. Moore raises questions of the group regarding their own knowledge of the dynamics of behavior which might be drawn upon to understand

the meaning back of the problems that come to the attention of the chaplains.

And so discussion and analysis continue throughout the afternoon.

However, chaplains find that many factors contribute to their growing understanding. The atmosphere of a college campus, the availability of libraries, and the dormitory sessions with fellow chaplains become learning experiences in themselves.

Social contacts may include outdoor picnics on one of Austin's lake sites or Sunday afternoon parties at a staff member's home.

Class sessions range from actual demonstrations of the chaplain's role and limitations in marriage counseling to a discussion of methods of referral and the use of community resources. At one point a gynecologist meets with the group to explain how the physical aspects of marriage may call for referrals to a physician.

Before the four weeks are over, the chaplains have circled the problems of counseling in many different ways. They have gained information about the modern family in a fact-giving kind of discussion. They have learned about new resources. They have studied processes of communication, both verbal and nonverbal as demonstrated by DSV-chiatrists, psychologists, sociologists, and social psychologists. They have gained new knowledge about modern culture as revealed through scientific research by sociologists

and anthropologists. Beyond that, through the case approach, actual problems encountered by the chaplains are reviewed and their meaning discussed.

While all these theories, practices, and resources are given to the chaplains in one form or another, the men themselves intersperse the lecture-discussion demonstrations with such "home work" as making library bibliographies, previewing films, and preparing tape recordings. They are given the opportunity of learning how to interpret, present, and use these materials with groups.

The Office of the Chief of Air Force Chaplains has decided to continue the program annually. Chaplain (Major General) Terence P. Finegan, the present Chief, arranged for two such seminars in 1959. One was held in January, and another in May.



AT A DINNER honoring U.S. Air Force chaplains at the Hogg Foundation's first 1959 Seminar on Marriage and Family Counseling, Dr. Henry A. Bowman received a well-deserved award. The American Social Hygiene Association presented an honorary life membership to Dr. Bowman, who as associate professor of sociology at the University of Texas has contributed much to the chaplain seminars. His *Marriage for Moderns* is in its fourth edition.