

This page is neither divinely inspired nor to be taken as revelation, and is therefore subject to correction, revision, or extension. Paragraph indicators are not for biblical like reference but for website management. I want to apologize to all those indirectly referred to or specifically named. That's a convenient apology for the exploitation of their names or positions in as much as most are deceased.

## WHY JASPERS—BIT OF PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY (11-9-2005)

1. Professor Robert Drake reached over and gently tapped the opened book and whispered, “He’s a good man”. The book was Karl Jaspers’ “Perennial Scope of Philosophy”.

2. In the early part of 1960, while in the Philosophy section of the Lincoln Christian College/Seminary Library, I looked at the book, and then went to other authors. Almost immediately I returned to Jaspers’ and stood reviewing the book more thoroughly. Jaspers wrote clearly, though comprehending took personal relating. I could read and allow my mind to wonder simultaneously. Reading for entertainment was not my bailiwick, and connecting to practical situations was imperative.

3. As I stood there professor Drake happened by to get a few books. His whisper could have been partly due to the fact we were in a library but the religious atmosphere of the School was--and remains—conservative. From the fundamentalist end of the thinking spectrum, unfriendliness toward philosophy was not only expected but also understood. His whisper was clearly discernable, and he left without further comment and to my recollection he never referred to Jaspers again.

4. He taught Archeology. An example of his scientific attitude can be reviewed at [www.debar.org/SemReview/ScientificMethod.htm](http://www.debar.org/SemReview/ScientificMethod.htm).

He also taught logic, philosophy, and theology. He was to become my major professor and advisor. I had only a casual association with him during my undergraduate work at the Great Lakes Bible College (now Great Lakes Christian College). He had accepted the position at Lincoln Christian Seminary before I graduated from Great Lakes. He was renowned within our religious community as a scholar, though one's reputation, to say the least, is not enhanced by any Degree in philosophy. A doctorate in theology might be tolerated, while a doctorate in psychology could inspire awe. One is almost deified if a doctorate in Greek and Hebrew is held. I'm referring to the images generally expected by the independent churches financially supporting their Schools.

5. A reputable gentleman and scholar, though as far as I know he received no honorary or other Doctorates. He was referred to as "professor". One day when a student addressed him as "Dr." he paused and--to a small number of Seminarians--shared the reasons why he had no doctorate. As students who first respected the person, our respect only grew upon hearing the reasons. He knew the value of traditional behavior and the importance of the proper, timely, and prayerful use of "thee" and "thou" though there was no reason to think that in Greek and Hebrew he was second to none.

6. He did become my Thesis advisor but was about to leave for another position when he suggested that I try to complete the Thesis before he left. He didn't want to leave me hanging, he said, like what had happened to him and others—if I understood him correctly. I had begun researching in the area of epistemology for a thesis, but was drawn back to Jaspers. Then, just as Drake left, through no further influence by him, it finally dawned on me to do a dissertation rather thesis. This dawning though definitely had something to do with my concentration on the first few pages of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason where I learned the significance of denying knowledge to "make room for faith"—especially with

regard to my self images. That conversion experience prepared me further for Jaspers' works.

7. Jaspers was potentially a controversial figure within our Church group and I realized a thesis would be inadvisable because I could not convincingly criticize him. Fortunately the requirements for graduation allowed a dissertation. No one else had done one there. (I'd not shared with others Drake's whisper, perhaps out of uncertainty surrounding the fact that he whispered it in the library, and because it might be controversial, and perhaps I misunderstood. I don't even recall being that conscious of its indirect influence.) The discipline for a dissertation was the same--selected academic readers, critics, including the Graduate School Dean, and surviving the oral-examination committee. The work had to be bound and two went into Library. I managed to avoid having my copy bound so it could be added to or changed easily.

8. When one thinks of a thesis, the dialectic process of theses-antitheses-syntheses comes to mind. A dissertation was more of a report than an argument. Dr. Richard Phillips, Drake's replacement, then became my advisor, and he soon left too. It almost seemed like coming to the School with even a doctorate in theology made one suspect. I had the credit hours for the Master of Arts and the Bachelor of Divinity degrees and was working on a two-part dissertation for the both degrees. Phillips soon left and James Strauss (now Dr.) replaced him just as I was completing the work. If memory serves me correctly, the final draft had been submitted for reading and the Oral Exam had occurred.

9. Strauss did a masterful job under the circumstances. On the surface he manifested apparent disapproval toward Jaspers. I'd met with him briefly and he made some suggestions, which I complied with, such as a preface restating my faith, an institutional need he was more aware of than I. He came late to the Oral Examination--and after a few had expressed themselves. (In retrospect, I suspect

he had been delayed at the Dean's office.) He immediately assumed command making a few statements about Jaspersian concepts, implied a need to be cautious with them, which the committee seemed relieved to hear, and quickly concluded the session. The swiftness of his comments and the quick conclusion surprised me for I was expecting more difficult questions. Perhaps that's understandable for the table of contents was, in an amateurish way, a little like the detailed analysis of the table of contents in Jaspers General Psychopathology.

10. After that and just prior to routing the dissertation for binding, I received a call from Mr. Strauss. He told me the Dean had noticed what everyone else had missed, that the title page stated the dissertation was being submitted for both degrees. He said to get both degrees each part would have to be separately bound. It seemed to have caused such a stir that I'm not sure the Dean had strength for the rest of the reading. Now...there was not time before graduation to do that, and to do it meant postponing graduation.

11. Suspicious of the real reason both degrees were impossible due to the timeframe, and wondering if the time factor had been merely a designed tool, I confronted the Dean who seemed quite nervous, and when I ask if there was some reluctance to allow me to graduate, he said no, but one's attitude might. We looked at each other and I'm sure he read my thought: "Your attitude or mine?" After the pause he then stated that we could look in my file and see if there was any record of approval for a two-part dissertation meeting the requirements. Not needing the record, I saw the handwriting on the wall, so to speak.

12. After conferring again with Mr. Strauss, what appeared as wise advice was offered: I could change the title page; submit it for one degree or the other, but he suggested going for the MA--though the BD required far greater number of credit hours. He said an MA for

me in the secular world would be of more value. At the time I was working as a clinician in The Northwest Indiana Alcoholism Clinic, under the Indiana Department of Mental Health. I opted for changing the title page to reflect that it was a work done to complete requirements for the MA.

13. I yet suspect there was some behind the scene designing, but still do not know whether it was God or the Devil, but then believed as now that it was less the Devil. Whichever, it was in me to arbitrarily react strongly to clearly known mendacious manipulation. I was not then as alert to the need to protect the Bachelor of Divinity degree and its association with the Church. This was more than less substantiated by Strauss's private comment to me that I was to be the first and last there to graduate with a major in Philosophy--at least that's how I interpreted what he said. All things considered, much not mentioned here, I don't disagree at all with the decisions or the final outcome. And that is how "Karl Jaspers' Existenz Philosophy and the Possible Application to Counseling" came about.