



NORMAN H. MARING, PH.D.
PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY
DEAN OF THE FACULTY

January 16, 1978

Dear Tom,

Having written a letter from the perspective of my institutional self, I want to follow it up with a note that comes from my more human self. I have found my thoughts frequently turning to you and our conversation last week, to my letter of Friday, and to the uncomfortable feeling that my words and actions have undoubtedly been the source of some anguish to you. I know that you are a sensitive person, in the best sense of the word, and therefore cannot help but be affected by misunderstanding, criticism, apparent lack of appreciation, and so forth. I remember your saying in the previous instance of contentiousness within the school that you did not want to participate in that first year course, because you could not constitutionally stand the emotional stress which repeated conflicts with students and others evoked.

I want to say that I regret feeling impelled to bring up the issue, but that having done so, I should be glad to engage in dialog with you in an effort to work out some kind of solution which would produce a harmony in our work together. You have made a contribution at Eastern and still have much more to offer. I believe, however, that the contribution will be more readily accepted and prove more profitable in the long run, if some modifications could be made in approach. What I mean by that, you probably understand, but I shall not elaborate in any case unless you are disposed to pursue the matter.

At this point, there would appear to be two directions in which our relationship can go. I am not so unrealistic as to imagine that you can simply continue to regard me as a good friend who has your best interests at heart, for it is too difficult to separate the bearer of unpleasant tidings from the tidings. You may revert to the polite and proper surface attitudes when these are called for, but harbor harsh feelings inwardly. The more difficult thing would be to strive together to reach the kind of personal understanding and the kind of adaptations required to work harmoniously and effectively in this kind of context.

Whether you wish to follow up on this matter further, I must leave to you. In any case I do not feel unmoved by having caused you vexation of spirit and would like to be able to help exorcise the demon.

Cordially,