April 20, 1956

TO MY FRIENDS:

I have only just now - and for the first time - seen the confidential list of those who contributed to establish the Harvard Professorship, and I hasten to express my deep sense of gratitude to all of you who have participated.

I am communicating with you in this way because it would be quite impossible to write at this time separate letters to the three hundred contributors to this professorship. As perhaps you are aware, the raising of this fund has been conducted without consultation with me and in one sense I regret that so many of my personal friends should have been approached. On the other hand, I cannot express in words my appreciation of the honor implied by your generous action.

In our undertaking to establish a permanent Center of Religious Learning at Harvard we feel confident that new approaches to religion will be developed; that more emphasis will be given to the old moralities, and that militant leaders will appear capable of re-establishing the old basic values by which the worldwide and deadly threat of Communism may be defeated. Surely even a partial achievement of these aims will make our efforts worth while.

And I earnestly hope that each of you will always have reason to be glad for your participation in this great undertaking.

With a lasting sense of gratitude for your kindness to me, I am

Faithfully yours,

John Lord O’Brien

Please believe that I am touched deeply by your generous thoughtfulness in this - and that I am always grateful for your friendship.