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S. D. G.*



And He Said UNTO THEM

When we think of the mission responsibility of the Christian, our thoughts are apt to follow rather a fixed pattern. We think of an organizational program that starts with a synodical convention in which a mission board reports the needs that have come to its attention in a given area either at home or abroad. There follows the enthusiastic endorsement of the convention itself and the joyful support of the members of the home congregations. We experienced the excitement of such work and the need for such a joint effort at our recent convention of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. We were given the rare privilege of meeting and hearing Mr. Fujita, one of the Japanese Christians, who told us of the new found joy and peace of mind of the Japanese people who had heard the Gospel from the lips of our missionary in Japan.

This is a perfectly proper arrangement that has been developed by the children of God for consolidating their strength and reaching areas with the Gospel that could not otherwise receive this blessed power of God. But it was not an organizational meeting that had been called by our Lord Jesus Christ that was to be told by Him, "Go ye into all the world." The men who had been trained by Him for that work were not to be master organizers. The simple truth is that this was to be an individual effort on the part of each of the believers that were gathered at His feet.

There is a danger that we may feel our mission responsibilities satisfied when we have supported the mission program of our church with substantial gifts. Let it be understood that this is only a small part of what was asked by the Savior. We will do well to look closely at the words of Christ and understand what it was that He said UNTO THEM.

The Lord was speaking to individual disciples and was asking of individuals that they should preach the Gospel. Each of them was to accept the responsibility of teaching the Gospel to men when the occasion presented itself. There would be relatives and neighbors, friends and chance acquaintances before whom they would stand and their Lord was asking them to make known the forgiveness that belonged to all and the hope of eternal life that was secure in the cross. Each would do this in his own way and would use the gifts for that purpose that God, in His wisdom had distributed among them. It would not be an easy assignment for them. They had no special childhood training for this kind of work. They had been raised as fishermen and carpenters and business men. They were trained to speak of and to teach their own familiar trades.

But they did it! We are not given detailed accounts of the quiet, individual work that must have been done by those early Christians. But it was done, you may be certain. By no stretch of

the imagination can we attribute the rapid growth of the early Christian gatherings to the work of a few key men. We are told that after Pentecost the Lord added to the Church daily. The believers knew what the Savior wanted and they must have spoken freely to all their contacts, telling again and again that the blood of Christ had satisfied the anger of God and that through Christ God had reconciled the world unto Himself. That men believed was indeed the work of God. But the believers had been ready to speak so that this faith could be wrought in others.

UNTO THEM! Should we not count ourselves among those who sat at the Master's feet that day and let Him ask of us what He asked of them? He looks to us to teach the Gospel to those among whom we live, to those with whom we work and play. The opportunities are there for us as surely as they were for the disciples. He does not ask of us that we stand on the street corners and try to draw the attention of the passerby. There are far better opportunities. We will have friends who betray a restless, troubled spirit because

they have not found the peace of heart and mind we find so precious. There will be our working associates who are caught up in the mad scramble of the business world and who can measure accomplishment only on terms of dollars and cents. There is the casual acquaintance who is deeply troubled because he lives in a violent generation and has not learned that the highest hope is not peace among men. There are the children in our homes who must have the truth of their salvation firmly rooted in their hearts. The opportunities are there and always will be.

Our Lord asks that we speak. He asks it not only of those who have been especially trained but of all, young and old, those who find it easy to speak and those who stumble over their words.

Was the Master asking too much? He had prepared the disciples so that they could indeed go enthusiastically and do His bidding. You will remember that during the three years of their preparation there was nothing that resembled the training of expert salesmen or high-powered public

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relations people. It was instead a period of time in which Jesus inspired in them a deep concern for the lost and condemned creatures among whom they walked. And this was done very carefully.

They were years spent in teaching them to understand what it meant that they were redeemed from the curse of sin by Him. For Peter, James, and John it was done in dramatic fashion when they were permitted a glimpse of the glory of God on the mount of Transfiguration. It brought them to their knees in terror for this was more than sinful man could bear. What a relief for them to hear from the lips of the Son of God Himself that they were cleansed of all sin so that they could approach the glory and majesty of their God and it would not be turned upon them in wrath but would be used to support and sustain them. They were years in which the disciples were in the presence of death many times and each time they would shrink from the thought that they too must die. Little wonder that the Savior was so careful to tell them that those redeemed would rise from the dead to live with Him eternally.

And with this comfort held securely in their hearts, they could not be unconcerned about those among whom they lived. They would speak the Gospel. They must. The cleansing power of the blood of Christ was such that it would cleanse their hearts of all selfishness and fill them with the concern for others that touched the heart of the Savior Himself. They

had His example to follow. They saw Him spend hour after hour in bringing this assurance of forgiveness to troubled sinners. They were witnesses to the total weariness that seized Him because this must be done. Through His eyes they saw the throngs of men that were in the power of Satan and heard His urgent word, "The fields are white unto the harvest." Nothing was too much for Him and they were invited to go up to Jerusalem with Him and witness the price that He must pay because of His deep concern for sinners.

We have been as thoroughly prepared as were the disciples. He has spoken to us the comforting words of forgiveness and has impressed upon our hearts the certainty of eternal salvation. We need but look carefully at what He has made of us, at the peace of mind we have, to find that same concern for others that was so evident in the early Christians. Remembering what He has made of us, we will find ourselves compelled by our love for others to bring them this power of God with whatever gifts our Lord has given us.

If we find ourselves timid and shy in our efforts, let us remember that there is no need for that. Mark reports for us of the disciples that after He had asked it of them, "They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them." He did it then and assures us that He will continue to do so until the end of time.

ROBERT REIM

This is a portion of the report Mr. Fujita, the delegate from Tokyo, gave to the 1965 convention of the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

Dear Brethren in Christ,

Deep gratitude to our Savior — Lord fills my heart at this opportunity to meet with you and to address you, brethren.

First of all, I have been requested to extend fraternal greetings unto you from the members of Hachiman-Dori Ev. Lutheran Church of Japan.

Secondly, we wish to extend our sincere thanks to you for assisting us with your prayers, your counsel, and your financial aid. We are of course looking forward to the day when we will need only your prayers and fraternal counsel.

Humanly speaking, the future is overshadowed by the escalation of the war in the Far East. There is much in both the political and economic field to fill the heart with foreboding. Asian feeling of nationalism and independence is making Western influences and presence more and more ineffective. For good or evil, the Asian wishes to conduct his own affairs without paternalistic interference from the great Western powers.

The Christian Japanese sees the utter confusion and division of thought also in the Westerners' efforts to propagate Christianity in Japan.

The approximately 4000 Protestant missionaries and clergymen are roughly divided into two camps: The ecumenists and the anti-ecumenists. The ecumenists have grouped themselves about the



Mr. Fujita and Family

National Christian Church, formed during World War II under pressure from the Tojo Cabinet and thought-control police.

The anti-ecumenists have grouped themselves about the aggressive "Evangelical Missionary Association of Japan." Yet from our point of view they are not at all anti-ecumenists in doctrine or practice, for they practice unionistic prayer and pulpit fellowship. Their opposition is directed mainly against the political and social platform of the World Council of Churches.

The Lutheran groups in Japan are working rapidly toward the realization of one Lutheran Church, and practice fellowship with the Evangelical Missionary movement. The Wisconsin Synod missionaries, as far as we know, are not participating.

In Japan, one may hear and read publications reflecting every shade of theological thought found



Missionary Tiefel with some Members

in the Western world. There is utter confusion.

Shortly before his departure from Japan, our pastor asked the members to list some of the hindrances to, and difficulties for the acceptance of Christianity, or for remaining a Christian, in Japan. We will quote from some of their responses.

(1)

“Generally speaking, in the present era we do not have great political or social barriers against Christianity in Japan. However, I wish to point to some practical problems for the Christian salarymen, when working for a construction company.

(a) Pressure to attend company banquets, company-sponsored Buddhist funerals etc. Because of my kidney weakness, I cannot drink alcoholic drinks. Yet if one

refuses to drink a cup of rice-wine when offered by one's office superior, it is considered an insult. Moreover, the professional entertainers, the geisha girls, when drunk use language unbearable for a Christian's ears.

(b) Furthermore, Japanese companies have no consideration for Sunday as a Sabbath day. It is a work-day like any other day. Also, frequently the hours are so long that the body is completely exhausted on Sunday morning.

(c) Especially in the construction business, the Shinto priests are customarily called to consecrate the land, appease the spirits for disturbing the land, recite prayers for the cornerstone laying, for the completion of rough work, and finally Shinto dedicatory services. It is difficult for the Christian employee to refuse to participate

in these (for most men) meaningless ceremonies.

(d) Above all, the indifference in Japan to concrete religious ideas is very great. It is a great and heavy sea, so that if we depart from our Christian walk of life in any way, we are certain to be engulfed and drowned in the great waters of indifference to spiritual truth."

(2)

"Everyone has a fear of death. We students feel generally that science and scientific inquiry can discover the origin and nature of man. And that therefrom we can derive knowledge to comfort our minds and find peace. So we naturally did not take great interest in religions. But since my being brought to church through my elder brother, I discovered the emptiness and vanity of the scientific or philosophical approach to the soul's problems.

"Especially my school is devoted wholly to scientific research. Most of the researchers do not believe in the existence of a Creator-God. Of course they pride themselves in being very intelligent. I have learned better from God's word, and must endure the ridicule of my friends, who now consider me 'non-intelligent'."

(3)

"I was a Christian before I came in contact with Hachiman-Dori Lutheran Church. But here I learned a better way. Here I learned also the Old Testament, not only the New, and that *all* of the Bible is God's Word, not only the New Testament, and that we

must accept all of the Scriptures without doubting.

"From Pastor Tiefel I learned that man and woman were not equal in an unrestricted way. In church man can preach; woman should be silent. Woman is to be an assistant of man in the home.



Mrs. Yamanaka with son Toru

So women cannot work equally with man in marriage, but should acknowledge him as her head. After the war, Japan became democratic, advocating equality of man and woman. In the Japanese legislature, in the business offices, women have entered. They are permitted to speak in every place and are working equally with man; thus I was taught. Therefore I was very surprised when I heard (from Pastor Tiefel, who came from democratic America) how women was created, with some examples from the Old Testament. By learning this I was completely changed. I, who wanted to work through life as a strong independent woman, was destroyed. As a result, I entered into the small world, where only I take care of one, cooking

meals etc. Namely, I became a simple housewife.

“But God in His great mercy has given me a young husband who came to church with me while we were keeping company. He attended Bible class with me at Hachiman-Dori Lutheran Church. He is now a Christian and we received God’s blessings upon our marriage, and I can serve him with a free heart as unto the Lord. It is our prayer that God in Christ continue to bless us so that we both may serve him in eternity.”

(4)

“Some of the barriers I see to Gospel acceptance are:

(a) Mistrust toward the supposed Christian Western nations who bring the Gospel to Japan.

(b) Christian nations have done political injustice to Oriental nations.

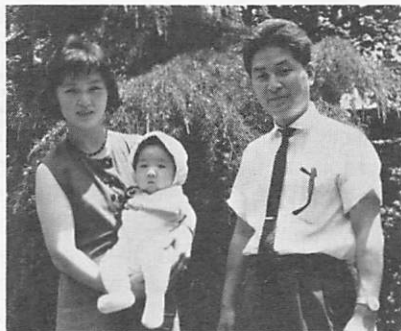
(c) The superiority complex of the white races, which at first makes it difficult to give ear to a preaching of love from a western missionary.

(d) The higher standard of living on the part of Western nations and their representatives, though this is changing.

(e) The atomic bombing at Hiroshima and Nagasaki by Christian America, and its continued justification.

(f) The cruelty of the German people against the Jews, for we had highly admired the Germans as a superior Christian nation.

(g) The difficulty of the Japanese language (Buddhist in background) which does not easily convey the Bible ideas.



Mrs. Tojo and infant son on his Baptism day with Mr. Kitaoka.

(h) The idea of Sunday as a Sabbath, when in reality the housewife must receive trades people and visitors just as on any other day.

(i) The Christian idea of sin, and personal responsibility for sin, clashes with the Japanese feeling that every Japanese descended from divine ancestors and is the dwelling place of a divine spirit.

(j) The Buddhist idea of mercy and tolerance of other religions and of all gods is deep in the feeling of Japanese blood, and the Japanese cannot easily tolerate the one-and-only-true-God teaching of the Bible.

(k) The new post-war religion of Soka-Gakkai does not ask for money but promises the people wealth, health, and prosperity in this world already, and says, “If you don’t have money to give, you can fight to make another convert.” This energy is just as acceptable as money — so they are truly gaining millions of converts not only out of fear but also through the enthusiasm of the members.

“I think it will take a long time

before the true way of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, the only true Savior-God, is accepted by many Japanese. I pray that God open their hearts.”

(5)

“At Hachiman-Dori Lutheran Church, I received the true knowledge of God’s mercy. Not because I was a good man or have a quality in myself, but only by the mercy of God did I receive such a wonderful knowledge of salvation. I know that by nature I am a most miserable person and deserve no blessing.

“Had I not met a true teacher of the Gospel, I would look the same externally, but I would not have found true peace of heart. No doubt I would be like many of my contemporaries, who try to find escape in drinking and find satisfaction only in the material things of this earth, without God, without hope, without an eternal goal — merely existing;

“We must be eternally thankful for the great mercy of our Lord Jesus, and we will teach our wives and children and others by all means.”



Guests at the wedding of Mr. Fujinawa and Miss Mukaida, both communicant members of the Japan mission.

BOOKS AND IDEAS

What is Normal ?

In the past few years we have seen two or three families in different cities suddenly bereft of a congregation. They started over. Parents became responsible for teaching their children. Several families gathered for taped services in various homes. Each one urgently sought others to share their Gospel with them. Occasionally a pastor came and there was much rejoicing, for the Sacraments could be administered.

And they yearned for a return to normal. Two things they lacked. They must have a pastor of their own and a church building. They need a pastor particularly for confirmation instruction, but also for Baptism and Lord's Supper. They need a church building so they can do mission work, and have a place to bring people to hear the Gospel. They need Sunday School. They need a place for youth groups to meet.

Finally their prayers are answered and the great day of installation of the pastor comes. Now things will be normal again. Congregational life can begin. We have someone to take care of our needs and make the church grow.

This is the most dangerous hour in the life of a congregation. For things will indeed return to normal - normal as we think of it. The members will become passive, happy to be fed. They will be anxious for the pastor to be as much in line with their concept of

a pastor as possible. He must above all, call upon them regularly. They will look to him to make the congregation grow. When it doesn't grow they will find the reason in his preaching, his manners, his lack of calls, his wife, his children.

The pastor will fit himself into the pattern. He will try to be a good father to the flock; guide them to a building program; develop loyalty to the services and other functions of the church; chide those who do not participate fully in all functions. While molding this congregation into a cooperative fellowship, he will seek to find other people who can be fit into the group. With hard work another congregation will slowly develop.

Maybe the Abnormal is Normal

The Kingdom in Action by Frederick W. Danker (Concordia, 1965) provokes us to some serious thinking about our attitudes toward congregational life. He reminds us that the church cannot build the kingdom; the kingdom builds the church. The church is the creation of the King who places His hand on individuals and redirects their lives.

Only God can give the Kingdom and He does this in unusual ways. He gave the kingdom to 12 uneducated men and through them started a revolution. The first 12 theologians of the New Testament Church were drafted from the laboring class. They did not settle

down into pastorates...they appointed elders (pastors) in every place from the ranks of the laity. That is the way the Gospel reached so many in the first century. Do we need a pastor for every service? The Book of Acts teaches us much flexibility. Through the laity we can reach thousands.

In another chapter Professor Danker demonstrates that though we cannot build the kingdom, we are to reflect the kingdom. Instead of trying to gain members for the congregation we should be concerned with mirroring Christ to each person we meet in the community, making real sacrifices of love to our fellowman in his many needs. Instead of volunteering for congregational tasks which frequently serve our own needs, would it not be real ambassador work to accept difficult and unpleasant assignments to help the delinquent, the prisoner, the sick and needy in the community?

In a chapter on proclaiming the kingdom the point is well made that we emphasize the proclaiming to the congregation and not the proclaiming from the members to each other and to all men. It's the old question of do we eat to live or live to eat. Do we make our hearing the Word an end itself, as though we exist to be fed, or do we look upon our feeding on the Word as the means for gaining strength so we can better proclaim the good news to our fellowman? Here the book stresses how woefully weak we are in educating ourselves for this task. The sche-

dule of the church should be an educational one preparing all members to be theologians indeed, who know the Word, who know the times, and who are able to proclaim the Kingdom.

Priest among priests

The same problem is attacked from an entirely different angle by Richard Sommerfeld in *The Church of the 21st Century* (Concordia, 1965). He analyzes our organizational patterns and finds them woefully lacking for our present society. Though the Gospel is unchanging, our forms must change with changing social patterns.

Our patterns are based on a rural situation of a hundred years ago when groups of Germans or Norwegians were transplanted from Europe to a spot in mid-America. Here the people were all of one type and the church was the center of their social structure. Living revolved around the church and the people in the church.

Are we trying to re-create this social unit within our cities and suburbs? Are we trying to make homogenized groups of people, restructuring their lives according to the pattern of the old congregation? Dr. Sommerfeld believes it cannot work in the urban way of life.

Urbanism brings mobility. One out of every five families moves each year. There is much leisure time, but this is more than offset by involvement in leisure activities. Social relations have changed. Formerly we knew relatively few people and we knew each one thor-

oughly. Today we know so many people but we know one another in terms of particular functions. The gas station attendant is known in terms of his pumping gas and providing minor services for your car. You don't associate with him and his family or share interests, so you know little about him.

These social changes mean "that the church cannot assume a pre-existing social unity among its members. Today the members of a large congregation associate as little as do the regular customers of a shopping center supermarket." This will make us unhappy if we think church unity is based on social relations. Actually this opens hundreds of doors, if we can think of each Christian as an apostle, a priest to bring the message to His fellowmen everywhere.

Another great change is education. Formerly the minister was the educated man in the community, the wise man in the congregation. Today this is not so. The minister may expect to have his remarks evaluated critically by a membership as knowledgeable as he. Nor is the membership a flock of silly sheep to be led around. The paternalistic church is dead.

The church should take itself less seriously as a collective group. It should not try to supplant the family or try to be another social unit. Togetherness is a hindrance, unless it builds the individual priest and helps him to function as a priest. The church should supply the resources the priests need.

Annual membership reports should be no more important than

those of a hospital. Success of a hospital is not determined by number of admissions or new buildings. The significance lies in the service provided, treatment rendered, successful rebuilding of bodies. Our success does not lie in how many people we admit to membership, but in what we do to, for, and with people spiritually. Sommerfeld like Danker comes to the neglected function of lay training in theology. "The laity is the great 'frozen asset' of the church. Thawed out, it has, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, tremendous potential."

Minister as Resource

What is a minister? We place so much emphasis on our forms that we neglect the important thing. We need a minister for the Sacraments. But is this true? How long would it take to train a layman to administer Sacraments? 10 minutes at the most. This is not the minister's value. Confirmation instruction? In Luther's day parents taught their children the catechism. Could an educated American teach the catechism to his children?

The minister is trained in knowledge of Scripture, church history, doctrine. Packed in his head are resources that the adults in the congregation desperately need. The minister is a priest trained to teach his fellow priests.

How do members view themselves? Are they the sick patients and the pastor is the doctor? Or are they interns coming to learn more and more so that they can go out and carry out a ministry

of healing? Certainly, the interns get sick and need healing, and the doctor cares for their needs. But their purpose in life is not to be patients, but healers.

How do pastors view their congregation? As closed groups gathered around the pastor? Are they the family and he the father? Is the climax of church life when the children all assemble together?

Maybe the climax is the moment when the congregation is leaving the church, each priest going to his car and starting his week's journey into the community as an ambassador of the King.

We yearn for a centripetal church, but the King would make us a centrifugal force.

W.S.

Our Mission Program

The mission program of the Church is always the same: The Spreading of the Good News of Salvation to the best of our abilities in manpower, money, and time. The question that always nags at us is what does it amount to in the CLC and what can we do to improve it - at least what can we work toward - yes, where does our 'mission money' go????

At the present time there are many churches in the CLC which are small in number of communicants. They would rightly come under the term of missions. They need our support. At the present time many of the pastors have been working part time or full time at a secular occupation and the main task of 'spreading the Gospel' must of necessity suffer. There are always new calls coming in, asking our CLC to serve new groups of people, often formed by our own members whose occupations have led them away from their home churches. There are also calls from people who seriously feel the effect of the 'liberal movement' in

their communities - and they find mission fields for us to develop. What has your CLC been doing?

The first attempt has been to free as many missionaries from secular labor as possible. Here we have seen some wonderful results: One church was able to relocate and begin a new area of work, especially via the Sunday School, toward permanent growth. Another has been growing and blooming with a wonderful steadiness, so that it is now reducing subsidy - freeing more money for the work. Still another in an altogether different section is performing many baptisms and reaching into as many families. The last release has shown 28 adults in a class and people waiting for arrangements to form more classes. In Japan our missionary is training each individual to become a missionary in his or her own right. Naturally not every field will remain 'hot' continuously. At times some will have almost as many 'losses' as gains due to moving of members, but there is a real success in this work.

However, one of the sad parts of the mission program is that we must first sit down and see where we can trim. This in a very practical way means that we mark down every field that shows promise as one where the missionary *must* be released from secular work. The result is that many fields are marked for such release. Then we must cut again in counsel with other boards and only the field that is ripest gets a missionary-full-time. What about other fields? Where we are committed we try and try again - and finally send men into a field - for men are also scarce. Other fields we try to explore by sending men that are 'nearer' to the field (often 100 miles or more away) to try to investigate, test, and evaluate what we can do there. Thus your mission board by cutting and cutting again sets up a minimum budget. Then the CLC in convention cuts even a little more. Truly our mission work is an ambitious field of labor, but that is the heart-beat of our church - it is the commission - the great commission of our Lord.

What Should we Do to Improve ?

When our fathers came to America their first task was to go out and gather in the scattered faithful and become shepherds to them and their children. From this point they went out to work among the Indians and the unbelievers. This program often led them to travel hundreds of miles on foot, covering large areas of land. Often however they would cling to their

language and work only among their own people. They would hold the line. They were holding the truth and keeping their own. Has the Lord led us back perhaps even farther in history? Are we more in the position of the early church? Do we have groups scattered by a different type of persecution - the liberal way? Thus when they are forced to move they stand isolated as a burning brand in a new field, much as the Christians in Samaria. Are we just holding the line with them? We hope not.

Certainly we need all our manpower and far more to do the work. We do need to free all our men from secular labor and above all we need to send our sons into the Lord's vineyard. But don't we need to free them even more than that? Don't we for example need a 'flying missionary' in some areas where small groups could be served without fail as by the circuit riders of old? Do we perhaps need a general missionary, who would investigate all the new fields that call - sometimes for six months - sometimes for a year - so that we do not fail in noting a field? Should it not hurt us to find our seminary students being paid by the CLC to work on our campus but we have absolutely no money to send them out during the summer to gain experience so needed in becoming practical missionaries? There are certainly many areas where we can improve. It does not help to say we need men and money.

The first thing to find is where we can make full use of our gifts

and talents, which the Lord has given us. We need ever to ask ourselves whether we fully trust the precious words of our Lord to His workers: Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world... or: Arise and thresh... for I will make thine horn iron

and I will make thy hoofs brass... As missionaries (all of us) of our Lord we dare never be satisfied that we are doing the work - we need the spirit of a Paul, who wanted to get out of prison so that he could still get to Spain.

R. E. SCHALLER

REMEMBER THE DAYS OF OLD - III

(To place this installment in its perspective the reader is asked to read the previous portion in the August issue, in which we set forth the greatness of our heritage from Missouri and Dr. Walther.)

We also inherited shortcomings and weaknesses from Missouri. Even David has a Bathsheba, and even Walther his weaknesses.

The movement which brought confessional Lutheranism to America was not of the stuff of the Reformation. Luther found in Scripture the universal truth of the salvation of sinners. This he again set before the world. What Luther said and wrote was of universal significance to all people, everywhere.

This was not true of the reaction to the Prussian king's union decrees of 1830. This set Lutheran against Reformed, confessionals against unionists. The battle was fought with the arrows of doctrinal formulations from the quiver of the 17th century dogmaticians. This made the Gospel a party platform, a striving for *Lutheranism*, a competitive thing. The true ecumenical spirit was lacking.

Dr. C. F. W. Walther himself was a dogmatician. At the seminary he taught dogmatics (doc-

trine) and pastoral theology. This was the program for a theologian: learn the doctrines with proof passages by drilling and drilling; learn the Latin quotations from the Lutheran fathers; and learn pastoral theology, the "how" of applying these doctrines to every problem of congregational life.

By comparison the other branches of theology were neglected at St. Louis, particularly church history and exegesis (Bible interpretation). Walther was not a great exegete. As a result his theology was too much a re-stating of what Luther and the Lutheran fathers said, rather than a fresh presentation of Scripture itself.

Convinced that Luther had found the truth of the everlasting Gospel, Walther saw his role as establishing a church faithful to this Gospel. This emphasis on a "Lutheran" presentation was partially justified by the conditions in America, since the earlier Lutheran synods had departed from true Lutheranism. Walther was making

it clear that he was establishing and adhering to true Lutheranism.

One might ask what harm this could do if Luther's teachings were indeed scriptural. Certainly Walther was convinced by Scripture that Luther's doctrine was true. And indeed the clergy of Missouri was preaching true Gospel. But this approach had a grave weakness which laid the groundwork for the eventual collapse as we see the upheaval today, with the sorriest chapter of all just completed at Cobo Hall in Detroit.

Truth was established by quotations from Luther and the fathers. Frequently wrong sentences, wrong translations, wrong interpretations were also preserved by transmitting wholesale all from the fathers without careful examination and rethinking. Deep scriptural work was neglected.

The bad results did not appear at once. But the second generation in Missouri not only established doctrine and settled controversies by quotations from Luther and the old fathers, but more and more by quoting Walther. The second generation was convinced that Walther had brought them the truth and they labored to preserve *the Missouri position*. Energy and thinking was exerted in preserving the precise formulations of doctrine. When these were attacked, as in the election controversy, the battle became a party matter, a fighting for the Missouri stand. Catchumens were required to memorize not only the proof passages but also the questions and answers of the catechism. Loyalty to a sy-

nodical position was confused with loyalty to Jesus, Savior and Master. This, coupled with the great success of Missouri in numerical growth, soon developed into loyalty to the organization as such.

The important lesson we must learn from this history: The Gospel is not preserved by our doctrinal formulations and intellectual mastery of them. Purity of doctrine is preserved by the proclamation of the Good News, a proclaiming, a heralding that comes from the depths of Scripture and flows through faith for faith.

The influence and work of Dr. G. Stoeckhardt, the first great Bible scholar of the Missouri Synod, helped to stem the downward trend. But it was too late. The pattern had been established and dogmatics still reigned as queen at the seminaries. The leading influence after Walther was Francis Pieper, again a dogmatician. As the second generation merged into the third, the Missouri clergy simply took for granted their position was correct. They proclaimed it and defended it and looked to Professors Pieper and Bente to answer any problems which arose.

The doctrinal statements became the starting point and logical conclusions were drawn from them for practice. These practices often became rules which had to be applied mechanically to avoid suspicion of any unorthodoxy. The doctrinal statements became the source of action and decision instead of Scripture itself. Strangely, instead of preserving the doctrine of the fathers this always distorts

the doctrine. A few examples will demonstrate this.

Walther taught at Altenburg that the Christians were not dependent upon bishops, but that Christ gave His authority to believers: they could call, ordain, and install pastors. Later he fought for the divine institution of the ministry against the Buffalo Synod. He was quoted again and again for the next hundred years in hundreds of applications. Walther was correct; but his descendants, though using his words, retained the letter and not the spirit, and these doctrines were twisted.

What Walther insisted was a right of the congregation turned into a law that only the corporate congregation has the right. Walther taught that bishops were not essential; his followers taught that bishops were forbidden by Scripture. In its organization meeting the Missouri Synod agreed to an amendment restricting the synod to an advisory capacity. Soon it became the law of God that synods have only advisory functions.

When Walther debated with Buffalo he frequently used the term "Pfarramt," (pastoral office) but he used this word as a synonym for "Predigtamt" (ministry). In the next generation the meaning of "Pfarramt" became restricted to the specific office of the pastor of a local congregation. Walther's statements about the ministry were now applied to the pastorate, though that had not been his meaning. Walther's doctrine was scriptural; it could be preserved not by quoting him but by follow-

ers who in each generation and in each application would redraw these truths from Scripture. The weakness of doctrinal formulations lies in their intellectual character and their truthfulness is tied to the controversy in which they were formulated and to the meaning of the language of that very day.

Another example was in Walther's insistence on the proper distinction between Law and Gospel. He warmed the hearts of his students with a burning love for the good news and a hatred for legalism and any conditioning of the good news. But in a church body where this great man was made into an object of veneration and almost adoration, even this great truth was distorted. In fact, this distortion was the key to Missouri's later collapse.

"Law and Gospel" became a slogan for Missourians. "We preach the law in all its severity and the Gospel in all its sweetness." The expression, "Law and Gospel," acquired a new meaning and emphasis. For Walther the Gospel was always predominant; the Law had a very subordinate role. But with the millionth repeating of the slogan, the word "Law" gradually lost its lesser role and became equal in weight with "Gospel." Even the sequence of the two words became a rigid pattern: first Law, and then Gospel.

Sermons became artificial and stereotyped. First the preacher found the law elements in the text and harranged the hearers for 20 minutes. This was to achieve proper contrition. During this period

everyone pretended that Jesus had not come and redeemed man. The audience was assumed to be in a state of unbelief. After establishing that all were doomed to everlasting perdition, and with an anxious look at the clock on the balcony railing, the preacher suddenly shifted gears and informed them that everything was all right because Jesus came and died for all sins — amen. This preaching led to a materializing of conversion. The *preacher* brings the sinner to the proper point of contrition and grief and despair. The *sinner* evaluates his condition and desperately yearns and cries for a Savior. When his antenna is fully extended and charged, the Gospel is powerful enough to make contact with the receiver.

Though the essays and textbooks insist that all the power to save lies in the Gospel, yet the ministers and people operate more and more with the *readiness* for the Gospel which is achieved by the preacher and hearer, and through the Law. As soon as the emphasis turns on human activity the church becomes activist. No longer is God creating believers but the church is building God's kingdom. This was Missouri's fatal error.

The proper distinction between Law and Gospel cannot be preserved by a set of rules for making this distinction. It is preserved only when sinners who have been overwhelmed by God's grace and forgiveness, from faith in their Savior-God, proclaim their joy to fellow sinners.

A final blemish in Walther's

background must be mentioned. He came from pietistic circles and much pietism remained in him and in many of the early founders of the Missouri Synod. Pietism is always external and helps in the process of materializing the kingdom of God. In this case it produced rigidity in form. Missouri had to have a position on everything: theater attendance, dancing, charging interest, engagement, life insurance, birth control. As the doctrinal formulations of Missouri became fossilized and sterile in rigid terminology, so did the standards for individual behavior. And when changes were later made in the standards for behavior, as was inevitable because they were not sound, faith in the infallibility of the "true visible church" was shaken. If one position can change, all positions can change.

Summary

By 1920, after 75 years, Missouri is a strong church, loyal to the Gospel, confessionally courageous, filled with a great mission zeal. It was a mustard tree indeed where thousands upon thousands found rest. It was a great vessel of God to bring the true Gospel to countless people in our land as well as in Canada, India, China, Africa, and Latin America.

Its weaknesses came from the flaws in Walther, since he was so great that he dominated the picture not only in his own lifetime, but for the entire 75 years. The weaknesses led to its becoming more and more Missouri: Missou-

ri-minded, Missouri-conscious, Missouri-loyal. The people were trained not only in the Word and doctrine, but in the knowledge that one must remain in the Missouri Synod until death. The ecumenical spirit was lacking.

The final sequence of events these past thirty years was inevitable. Dr. F. Pieper ruled the Missouri Synod from Walther's death in 1887 until his own death in 1931, a period of 44 years. As long as he lived there could be no change in Missouri's position and policies. But it was not a healthy uniformity, and the rebellion against legalistic rigidity and traditionalism was bound to come.

Young men in Missouri began to do graduate work in theology at the large universities and theological schools. They discovered that Missouri had no monopoly on the Gospel. There were great students of Scripture who were way ahead of Missourians in knowledge of the Bible. Some of these younger men recognized the unecumenical spirit in Missouri and also that its adherence to doctrine was very traditional mind is amazing.

It would have been healthy to inject creative Biblical work into Missouri's hardening arteries. But the new leaders accepted some of the higher criticism and unionistic spirit of the Protestant and false Lutheran world. They rejected not only what was weak in Missouri, but they became ashamed of its strength as well. Still motivated by external greatness and anxious to make Missouri influential in world religion, they led a reaction which

has propelled Missouri into the mainstream of modern religious thought.

The emergency atmosphere of World War II smoothed the way. The chaplaincy program alone was enough to train a generation of congregational leaders in un-confessionalism. Those who knew the direction was wrong were helpless to stem the takeover. Excellent men like Th. Engelder and L. Fuerbringer were too long trained in the unity of Missouri. In their declining years the specter of civil war caused them to shy away from an open clash in the faculty. John Behnken was obsessed with the obligation to hold the synod together at all costs. The Chicago Study Club fought bravely but failed to understand the weakness of old Missouri. They fought the new thinkers with the traditional pronouncements, which was exactly the wrong method.

The rank and file had long been conditioned to the infallibility of its leadership. When doctrinal convictions are based on the proclamations of the fathers, when proof texts are valid because of official interpretations, it is no problem to replace these interpretations with newer ones. Nothing is more easily shifted than an intellectual grasp of doctrine. The agility of the human mind is amazing.

These weaknesses in old Missouri are also a part of our heritage. But to understand ourselves we must first study what we have inherited from The Wisconsin Synod and the Ev. Lutheran Synod.

W. S.

The Bread of Life

Date Reading Hymn

Christian Freedom

Oct. 7—Matt. 15:1-9	377,1-2
Oct. 8—Matt. 15:10-20	377,3-4
Oct. 9—Matt. 17:24-27	377,5-6
Oct. 10—Is. 1:10-18	377,7
Oct. 11—1 Cor. 9:19-23	377,8
Oct. 12—Gal. 6:11-18	377,9
Oct. 13—Micah 6:6-8	377,10

The Great Commandment

Oct. 14—1 John 4:7-16	429,1
Oct. 15—1 John 4:17-21	429,2
Oct. 16—Deut. 30:11-14	429,3
Oct. 17—Eph. 6:1-4	464,1
Oct. 18—Gen. 22:1-14	464,2
Oct. 19—Eph. 6:5-9	464,3-4
Oct. 20—Philemon	464,5-6

The Healing of the Paralytic

Oct. 21—Luke 19:1-10	324,1
Oct. 22—Heb. 10:1-10	324,2
Oct. 23—1 John 1:5-10	324,3
Oct. 24—Heb. 10:11-18	324,4
Oct. 25—Rom. 3:21-26	324,5
Oct. 26—Jude 20-25	324,6
Oct. 27—Jer. 17:12-17	324,7

The Lord's Banquet

Oct. 28—Ex. 16:1-15	415,1
Oct. 29—Ex. 16:16-30	415,2
Oct. 30—John 15:1-8	415,3
Oct. 31—1 Pet. 2:4-10	415,4
Nov. 1—Rev. 3:14-22	415,5
Nov. 2—Heb. 7:23-28	415,6
Nov. 3—Rev. 19:6-10	415,7

Dear SPOKESMAN Editor:

Your July issue, page six, states that the 1953 Houston convention of the Missouri Synod "was capable of booing the official representatives of their sister synod, Wisconsin." Having been one of those representatives, in fact the one who had to speak on the convention floor, I can assure you that we were not booed. It is true, however, that "in the face of admonitions and charges Missouri reaffirmed its course."

Sincerely,
E. Reim

Since Professor Reim was present at Houston I must now assume that my information was wrong. We regret the injustice this remark did to the Houston delegates.—Ed.

Ruth Schaller
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