

LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

MAY 1966

Vol. 8, No. 12

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THE COMFORTER – THEN AND NOW

Robert Reim

It must have been a strange mixture of anxiety and excitement that filled the hearts of the disciples that first Pentecost. Anxious when they first heard the sound and first saw the tongued lights resting on their heads. Excited when it soon became clear that the Savior's promise had been kept and the Comforter had come.

The Comforter Then

The Savior had promised his disciples that after He ascended into Heaven He would send the Comforter who would testify of Him, who would teach them all things. This is what they would need. They would need a power that would fill them with an understanding of the Savior and His mercy that would give them the love and courage to go out into all the world in His name.

And the promise was kept. We need only read the account of Peter's activity on that first Pentecost to see the Comforter at work as promised. With rare courage he stands and confesses his faith in the Christ and presents the Gospel in a wonderfully lucid summary to the salvation of three thousand souls.

The Comforter Now

And this was not a single incident in the work of the Comforter. The promise was to all Christians for all time and the promise is kept. He still comes to all believers and testifies to them of Christ, teaching them all things. He provides a rich understanding of the Gospel to those who search the Word, an understanding waiting to be tapped by them when the opportunity presents itself to proclaim the Gospel to those who hunger for it.

To illustrate the continuing activity of the Comforter in today's believers, we may cite an example that recently came to our attention. There is a busy physician in a southeastern community who was compelled to make unusual provision for the instruction and worship of his family. Others soon joined them and asked the doctor to serve them with the Gospel. Visitors came to the living room church. One of them recently requested instruction and baptism before leaving for Viet Nam. The Comforter at work!

What follows is part of a sermon heard by this group. You will take comfort from it as did those who first heard it, grateful that the Spirit continues to give men utterance.

John 20:19-31

"Blessed are they that have not seen and yet believed!" Thus speaks our Risen Lord to Thomas and to us! When his fellow disciples told Thomas of the Lord's resurrection, he replied stubbornly: "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe."

What a great sin, indeed, on Thomas' part! For what does his answer show but that he not only doubted the word of his fellow disciples, but also the Word of his Lord and Savior, who had expressly told him that He would rise again the third day. His statement was an open declaration that the Word of Christ and the Word of the prophets could not be trusted.

But if Thomas did not want to believe the Word of God and the prophets who spoke of the Lord Jesus Christ, how could he be certain that his sins were forgiven? How could he know that he was a child of God, under God's grace? He couldn't possibly know this or be certain of it—because where else does one learn that the "blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sins?"

In doubting the Word of God, Thomas could not possibly be certain that he had a Savior. He could only be fearful that his earlier trust in the Lord was only miserable self-deceit and a product of his imagination. We can well imagine the tormenting doubts that filled his heart at this time! Yes, how restless, comfortless and hopeless he must have felt! He had to feel, experience, and see everything first!

But isn't it so today — with so many people! So many today do not merely deprive themselves for eight days of the Easter joy, the open tomb, the seal of their forgiveness, but they do so for their entire lifetime.

What does the Lord mean, then, when He says: "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." He means that we are to believe His Word! We are to trust every word and letter and promise of it in childlike faith! We are to do this even if we do not feel it, or see it, or even experience it!

Indeed, God's Word should have been Thomas' guarantee, his certainty, his confidence; a thousand times more so than ever his senses! Our senses can deceive us, and often do but the Word of God never deceives us!

Second Class Postage paid at Van Nuys, California. Published monthly at 8503 Noble Ave., Sepulveda, California, as an official organ of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. The issues appear about the 25th of each month.

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POSTMASTER: Send notice on Form 3579 to the Lutheran Spokesman, 8503 Noble Ave., Sepulveda, California 91343.

Material submitted for publication should be sent to the editor one month before date of publication. Church and school news items and announcements should be sent to Pastor DeRose. Subscriptions and address changes and requests for sample copies must be sent to the Business Office, 8503 Noble Ave., Sepulveda, California 91343. Subscriptions are \$2.00 per year, paid in advance. Blanket subscriptions are \$1.75 to congregations.

The Christian then, believes that his sins are forgiven, as the Bible tells him they are through the shedding of Christ's blood on the cross! He believes that as his sins were buried with Christ, so he has come forth a new man, declared to be righteous in the sight of God, free from all sin, pure and holy! He believes that with Christ's resurrection from the dead, world, devil, sin, and hell are triumphantly overcome!

Yet, he sees and feels none of these things, but in fact the very opposite!

The Christian sees how sin still lives in his members, tainting and soiling him day in day out, and giving him a bad conscience. Yet, he believes that in God's sight he is just and holy in the blood of the Lamb.

The Christian sees that he sins, but he believes that he is holy! When a fellow Christian says unto him: "In the Name of Christ thy sins be forgiven thee," he knows that they are forgiven in God's book too.

The Christian, more often than not, sees and feels nothing but tribulation, trial, suffering, and cross which God sends him! Yet he believes that God holds nothing whatever against him, that he is God's beloved child, that God is well pleased with him, and that he is an heir of heaven.

The Christian sees and feels how the unbelieving world about him seems to fare so well, outprosper him in everything, lords it over him and despises him; and yet he believes the Word of God which tells him: "Fear not, for I have overcome the world."

He often sees no means whereby he can meet his financial obligations, support his family and attend to their several necessities, savings are gone,

outgo exceeds income, and things look black! Yet he believes the Word that tells him: "Cast all your cares upon me, for I care for you!"

The Christian often feels so miserable and restless, a tormented mind and soul, and an accusing conscience. Yet he firmly believes what Jesus says: "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."

He feels so poor in heavenly gifts, so poor in spirit, often so perplexed, and begs for every little thing, every drop from God. Yet he believes that of all men he is the most blessed; blessed indeed through Jesus Christ, his Savior.

The Church, as he sees it, totters and staggers, even as a pilotless ship that seems surely to sink at any moment; he sees mighty enemies within and without; yet he believes that the Church is built on Jesus Christ, the solid Rock, unsinkable, eternal, against whom the very gates of hell cannot prevail.

He sees the little flock of believers, Christian congregation is, but he poorly. Yet he believes that the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ has a special eye for them, that they are His flock, his elected and chosen ones now and throughout all blessed eternity.

He sees how weak and frail the Christian congregation is, but he believes that it is the spotless and sinless and clean assembly — washed white in the blood of the lamb, a glorious Church without blemish and without spot.

He sees how death, that terrible avenger, and how hell, that never satisfied monster, are gobbling up one soul after another. Yet he believes

that Jesus Christ has overcome them all.

He sees his loved ones laid low in the grave, leaving the place where they once were, filled with tears and sorrow; and yet, he believes that there is no death anymore, but only sweet sleep.

Finally, when he is in the throes of his own death, feeling its sting; when Satan then comes and fills him with thoughts of hell, when heaven seems surely locked to him and the terrors of judgment lay hold on his heart, he yet believes that death has been overcome for him, hell laid waste, and the devil bound in outer darkness. Yes, he is to believe that he is lord

over all these enemies, and even in death wave the victory banner of faith. Though he does not see heaven's doors opened and the angelic hosts singing and coming to bear him up, he knows that heaven stands ajar, ready to give him the crown of eternal life. Yes, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed!"

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This is the work of a person who is not a professionally trained minister of the Gospel. The Comforter is indeed at work now, ready to fill the heart of every believer with the Truth of God so that it can be proclaimed when the occasion demands it.

Ordination, Twenty-fifth Anniversary

The LORD is my Banner

Pastor Adalbert F. W. Geiger observed the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination on April 24, 1966. In a special afternoon service, Pastor Carl Thurow of Fridley, Minnesota, preached the sermon (Exodus 17: 8-16). Pastor W. Schuetze of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, spoke for the pastors of the Wisconsin conference. Mr. Robert Packard, chairman of Faith congregation, gave a fine talk in the name of the congregation.

Pastor Geiger graduated from the Lutheran seminary at Thiensville Wisconsin, in June, 1940. He was ordained at Immanuel congregation,

Oshkosh, Wisconsin, April 20, 1941. He organized and served Martin Luther congregation, Neenah, Wisconsin. From Neenah he moved to Trinity, Town Liberty, near Manitowoc, Wisconsin, then to the joint parish of St. Paul's and Zion at Hurley and Mercer, Wisconsin, then to St. James at Cambridge, Wisconsin. Since 1960 Pastor Geiger has been serving Faith congregation at Cambridge.

May the Lord of the Church give strength that His servant may continue to hold up his hands until the final victory. Exodus 17:12. D.

NEWS

PROTESTANTS UNITED

In a few years you will probably not use the words Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Methodist. Seven large Protestant churches are slated to become one denomination with about 25,000,000 members. This would be the largest Protestant denomination in the world. The seven major Protestant bodies are the Methodist, the Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal, Disciples of Christ, United Presbyterian, United Brethren, and United Church of Christ.

These seven churches were represented by a Consultation on Church Union which met at Dallas the first week of May. This Consultation came into being as a result of the call issued by Dr. Eugene Carson Blake of the United Presbyterian Church and Episcopal Bishop James Pike in 1960 asking all Protestants to unite in a church "truly evangelical, truly catholic, and truly reformed."

The progress at Dallas was remarkable. These seven churches reached unanimous agreement on doctrine, on worship, on the sacraments, on the ministry. Even the problems connected with infant baptism and open communion were solved. A 15,000 word outline of this agreement will be sent to the denominations to be passed along to local churches for study and comment.

The union is to be accomplished in two steps. First the churches will join in a federation in which the churches will share their ministries and membership. They will act together on major issues. But during this time each

church would keep its own leadership and structure. It is presumed that this experience will build up mutual trust and make it possible to solve some specific issues, such as ordination of women ministers. This federation would be similar to the structure of the Synodical Conference, where the synods kept their identity but exchanged ministers and members and acted jointly.

A preliminary paper on "the structure of the church" was referred to the denominations with the comment that many problems in this area remain unsolved. The organization of the new church will be the major item of discussion at the next meeting of the Consultation group, April 30-May 4, 1967.

A fourth document sent to the congregations of the churches involved was an "open letter" asserting that Christian reunion is not merely desirable but imperative out of simple obedience to God's will.

The tentative timetable for establishing the new church indicates it will take four years at best and 13 years at most to consummate the union. By first living together in a federation, the writing of the constitution for the united church can be postponed for a time.

The United Presbyterian Church, which took the lead in these deliberations recently participated in a series of meetings with the Lutheran Churches in the United States. The representatives at this meeting stated that they had reached a common understanding of the Gospel.

MISSOURI SYNOD ASKS STEPS TOWARD MEXICAN LUTHERAN UNION

Missouri Synod Lutherans in Mexico have decided "to explore all possibilities" for the creation of a Lutheran federation in this country with the declared ultimate goal of union in a single national Lutheran Church.

A resolution to this effect was unanimously passed in mid-March by the Concordia Conference of Mexico, a unit of the Caribbean Mission District of the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod.

The action was taken following approval of another resolution accepting an invitation from the Mexico Lutheran Church — affiliated with the American Lutheran Church — to intensify the two bodies' efforts to achieve mutual altar and pulpit fellowship.

JAPAN UNION

The Nihon Lutheran Church, an outgrowth of the Japanese mission of the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, and the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church are establishing altar and pulpit fellowship this spring. The Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church is a union of churches founded by several European and American missions, including those affiliated with the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America.

Plans for consummating this fellowship took place after congregations of the Nihon group voted to accept the JELC invitation to cooperate in worship activities. The two groups had previously agreed to conduct a Lu-

theran seminary together in the Tokyo area.

Dr. Oliver Harms, president of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, stated that several positive factors contributed to the favorable outcome of the Japanese negotiations. "There has been a steadily increasing measure of cooperation between the two groups in recent years," said Dr. Harms. "Such cooperation includes joint sponsorship of the Lutheran Literature Society, joint operation of the Lutheran Bible Camp, the production of a joint Lutheran hymnal, and strong JELC support of the Japan Lutheran Hour."

UNIFIED CAMPUS WORK PLAN ENDORSED BY MISSOURI DISTRICT

A proposal to establish a unified Lutheran campus ministry in Northern California was approved at a district convention of the Synod's California and Nevada District. The convention endorsed cooperation with the jurisdictional units of the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church.

The Missouri Synod has maintained a separate campus ministry because of unresolved doctrinal differences between the three Lutheran bodies. A joint campus ministry was not to be included in educational services offered by the new Lutheran Council in the U.S.A. when it begins operations next January as a successor agency to the NLC.

THIRD LUTHERAN FREE CONFERENCE

(Material compiled from literature disseminated by the Arrangements Committee)

The third Lutheran Free Conference is scheduled to meet July 12-14 at Columbus, Ohio. Sessions will be held at the Nationwide Inn. The topic for this year's conference is, "The Holy Christian Church and True Ecumenicity."

The First Lutheran Free Conference met in July of 1964 at Waterloo, Iowa. About 300 heard and discussed eight essays on the doctrine of the Scriptures. The Second Lutheran Free Conference met at Cedar Rapids, Iowa in July 1965. Six essays on the doctrine of Justification were read.

The immediate purpose of these conferences is to provide a forum for mutual strengthening of all who are deeply interested in an uncompromising confession of doctrines currently being jeopardized in the Lutheran Church. The ultimate objective is to obtain full unity in the understanding of the Lutheran Confessions and in their application in practical church life.

These meetings are called free conferences because they are meetings of individuals who meet as free agents, not representing their church bodies as such. They also do not have the financial support of any synodical body. Part of the expenses is covered by a registration fee. The greater part of the expenses is met by donations from interested individuals and congregations.

Following are the essays and essays for this year's conference. I. The Essence of the Church, The Rev. Winfred Schaller, Church of the Lutheran

Confession; II. The Creation of the Church, Professor Milton Otto, Evangelical Lutheran Synod; III. The Marks of the Church, The Rev. Otto Krause, Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod; IV. The Mission of the Church, Professor Oscar Siegler, Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod; V. The Functioning Forms of the Church, The Rev. Theodore Aaberg, Evangelical Lutheran Synod; VI. The Fellowship of the Church, The Rev. Harold Romoser, Lutheran Churches of the Reformation.

The basis for the conferences is agreement on the doctrine of the inerrancy, inspiration, authority, and historicity of Scripture, and on the necessity of doctrinal unity as a prerequisite for joint worship and church work. (This does not mean that everyone already has the same understanding in all matters.)

All - pastors, teachers, laymen - who find themselves in agreement with the purpose and basis of these conferences are invited to participate. Registration with the Arrangements Committee makes one a participant. Such registration is accepted as an expression of agreement with the purpose and basis of the Conference. Anyone not wishing to attend as a participant may register as an observer or visitor. The registration fee for participants is \$5.00 (only one \$5.00 fee is paid for husband and wife). Observers also pay a \$5.00 registration fee and receive all materials. Visitors pay a \$1.00 fee and receive no materials.

Registrations are to be sent to Lutheran Free Conference, 11844 N. Seminary Drive 65W, Mequon, Wisconsin 53092.



from the EDITOR

THE DALLAS STORY — or HOW MEN BUILD A UNITED CHURCH

What is the secret for uniting 7 large church bodies into one? The most important ingredient is disunity. As long as a denomination is united in the message it proclaims it can not in honesty unite with a denomination which proclaims a different and contradictory message. As long as the Episcopal Church was united on the Book of Common Prayer and the Presbyterians on the Westminster Confession a union was unthinkable.

Today there is so much disunity within these denominations that it is impossible for any of the denominations to bring its beliefs to the Marriott Motor Hotel in Dallas. The Episcopal Church always did have much elbow room for different theological positions. The Methodist Church has been interested in the perfect Christian and in social welfare and has never been much interested in the doctrines of Scripture. The Presbyterian Church was different. It once stood firmly on the Westminster Confession.

But during the past 100 years this has also changed. As each wave of new theology swept across the world it gained adherents in most church bodies. But the new waves never wipe out the old waves. So in the Presby-

terian Church today, and more so in the other denominations, there are 19th century rationalists, early 20th century liberals, social gospel men, and of course many neo-orthodox or existentialist theologians.

Picture then these seven denominations. Within each denomination there are wide-spread beliefs. There really can be no discussion of doctrinal differences between the denominations. If you have tolerated Bishop Pike in your own denomination you are hardly in a position to ask another denomination to change its confessional position.

The confessional standard for the proposed church is that all must be sincere followers of Jesus. Infant Baptism is recognized, but if you believe only adults should be baptised, that is also fine. Communion will be open to all "Christians," even those outside the proposed united church.

Disunited churches should have no trouble uniting with other disunited churches.

From Cooperation to Union

The background was favorable for Dallas in many ways. The necessary steps had been taken. The denominations had first settled their own household problems. As seen above this does not mean a unified denomination, but a united denomination. The Methodists united several elements in 1939. Seventy-five per cent of the Presby-

terains united about seven years ago. The very liberal United Church of Christ is a merger of Congregational, Christian, and Evangelical and Reformed Churches.

The next step is a history of cooperation through inter-denominational agencies such as the National Council and the World Council of Churches. By joint worship and work these denominations have already committed themselves to recognizing each other's preaching and teaching. Some enthusiasts had looked to these agencies to accomplish a uniting of all or most of the churches. This course has been a little bumpy lately.

The WCC began to have problems when it became too successful. In the past few years the Orthodox Churches from behind the iron curtain have been participating. Since the WCC must above all make political proclamations, things became awkward with the involvement of churches from Communist countries. This slow-down at world unity has created a favorable background for a merger of churches on an American level.

Pope John XXIII suddenly threw the Roman Catholic Church into the middle of the ecumenical movement. This turned everything upside down. This was more ecumenicity than some had bargained for. In the past several years Roman priests have been falling over themselves trying to preach in Protestant pulpits.

The involvement of Rome created a favorable atmosphere for Dallas. If Rome exerted a strong voice in the ecumenical councils, if dialogue with Rome became the new center of the movement, then the Protestants would be at a great disadvantage in the de-

bate because of their many fragments. A 25 million denomination was becoming a necessity.

The People are Ready

The vast majority of the members of these seven churches are ready. They have long been trained to ignore creeds and doctrine. The American is not tied to Christ and His Word as the source of strength; he is tied to "the church." You have to belong to church; you have to go to church; and different churches just do not make sense. They make more expense. These churches have long accepted everyone into membership without examination of beliefs, without requiring acceptance of a creed. Everybody believes what he wants to believe.

The One Universal Belief

The letter sent out by the Consulation at Dallas insists that Christian reunion is not only desirable but imperative. Obedience to Christ requires it, the letter states. This is the only creed they know, the only sure "word" from God. The churches must unite. It is not necessary to believe in the divinity of Christ, His Birth or Resurrection, His atonement, His forgiveness. The only false doctrine is separation from churches that claim to be Christian.

The Lutherans and the Baptists are the only major denominations not involved. There is no place in this proposed church for anybody who would "use verbal formulas to divide the Church or exclude sincere followers of Jesus Christ."

This is perhaps the most important factor of all. One must be governed by the conviction that is slavery to submit to a confession of faith. A man is free, they think, only if he can have

his own private set of beliefs. Tolerance must be shown to every teaching and doctrine. In reality this is the worst slavery of all. These 25 million people will be at the mercy of the "church" and whatever is taught in these churches. The one sin is to separate from the "church."

The reason behind this universal belief is that "we must join to fight materialism." This is the most sorrowful irony. To fight materialism by making the earthly structure of the church important is fighting materialism with materialism. These people employ a materialistic concept of Christianity, a large denomination as their weapon. They have lost the only weapon we know: where two or three are gathered together in my

name, there am I in the midst of them.

The Only Barrier

The new church may not come into being. The only thing which can prevent it is lack of agreement on the structure of the church. Some want bishops, some want presbyteries, some want local autonomy of the congregation. They cannot agree on church government, although church government is something Christ has not ordained and certainly not specified. Here, where they should be unconcerned, they are very concerned. This goes along with a materialistic concept of Christ and His Church. What the faithful are taught does not matter; how we run the organization does matter.

It was another dark day in Dallas.

WHAT ABOUT THE LUTHERANS?

The Lutherans were absent at Dallas. The Protestants feared the Lutheran attitude toward subscription to a confessional position would sabotage the merger plan.

The Lutherans are not quite ready, but they are not as far behind as one might think. The LCA, ALC, and Missouri Synod have not yet merged into one Lutheran body, but the important steps have been taken. The most important ingredient of all is now present, though not as readily admitted by all. The three Lutheran Synods each has the necessary disunity. It is not as extreme as in the more liberal Protestant groups, but it is there.

The LCA has always had a wide variety of theological teachings. Throughout their history they have insisted that unity was not to be

achieved by any additional confessional statements. All Lutherans should recognize each other, as long as they say they subscribe to the Augsburg Confession. Since 1938 the ALC (the predecessor to the present ALC) has made it a part of their position that agreement in non-fundamental teachings was not necessary.

Missouri has the same variety now in its own house. Within Missouri one can find men who still adhere to a strict 17th century doctrinal theology; one also finds teachers and pastors who have accepted much of the subjectivism of the 19th century Schleiermacher; more common than this are the men under the influence of existentialist theology, usually called neo-orthodoxy; the latest influence on Missourians is the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who made Christianity "relevant" by his writings in a Nazi

prison waiting for his execution; one also finds a large segment which accepts the position of the "evangelicals," a revivalistic-fundamentalist theology which finds approval for Billy Graham's Gospel even though he mutilates the Sacraments and power of the Word; but mostly one finds organization men who do not study theology but faithfully carry out the endless programs and activities for education, evangelism, and stewardship hammered out by the staff officers.

These men do not worry about doctrinal matters. If a few members become concerned by some new teachings, trends, or practices, these pastors tell them not to worry about it. As President Harms always says, "We have our problems, but they are being dealt with." Most Missourians now accept disunity in their ranks as a normal and permissible way of life. If a particular pastor is too far out they will at the most make sure he gets a call to a different congregation.

Those in Missouri who recognize the existing disunity realize that there is no legitimate reason for not joining in work and fellowship with the LCA and ALC. It is impossible to be intolerant of false teaching in another church, when it is tolerated in your own. Others prefer to delude themselves that the time is ripe for uniting because the LCA and ALC have become so much more confessional and conservative.

The past twenty-five years of cooperation in many areas of church work has bound the three large synods closely together. With the establishment of LCUSA at the close of this year they will be that much closer. In

the foreign fields (India, Japan, and now Mexico) the daughter churches are already united or uniting.

The optimistic conservative who still looks for a rebellion in the ranks of Missouri is the most deluded of all. This is impossible in Missouri. Ninety-nine per cent of the Missourians cannot even think of Christianity and the Gospel of Christ apart from the synod. The church is mother, and the only dangerous thing one can do is to leave mother. If they are told of false doctrines being taught in their churches and colleges and seminaries, they are sure this can never hurt them and endanger their salvation. But they would be horrified and terrified at the thought of sustaining faith and maintaining a Christian home without the facilities of the "church." They can not comprehend a family that drives 200 miles to come to our church for the sake of a Gospel proclamation without human additions. This poor family must depend often on taped services without a congregation, without organizations. The mother must teach her own children the Bible stories. Why, they have nothing to keep them safe in the Father's hand except the promise of Jesus!

When some Missourians do think seriously about the false teachings entering into their synod, they reassure themselves with the thought that it is better to have a church with 95% truth and 5% error than to be without the church. After all, says human reason, we cannot expect perfection here on earth. Everyone has problems. What they are not admitting is that the Lord was sincere when He said a litte leaven leavens the whole lump. What they are not admitting is that

they are gradually being leavened so that what they call a conservative minister today is quite different from what they called a conservative minister 20 years ago. Once we allow people to contradict Scripture, once we tolerate and put up with disunity, Dallas is not as far away as one might think.

Saddest of all, they do not realize they are receiving more law, less Gospel in the sermons each year. Fewer sermons speak of life eternal and the final judgment; more on earthly problems of race relations and government. They have more Bible Classes, but fewer answers. Christ gave us one assignment: preach and teach. Union will not make the preaching and teaching better.

Is There Hope at Columbus?

Five per cent of Lutheranism in America has separated itself from the ecumenical movement and today's theological trends. In a truly free conference they are reaching out to each other. Five or six synods are represented by individuals at these meetings. The largest is the Wisconsin Synod.

The testimony from the various groups against the present evils in the Lutheran Churches has not been very effective. Distressed Christians in the three large Lutheran churches are confused by the variety of voices among the dissenters. The disunity among the five per cent obviously blunts and almost nullifies the witness against the disunity in the large churches.

The temptation at Columbus will be

to unite for the sake of a united voice — to end the shame of disunity. If this will motivate — then we would be under the same condemnation as Dallas and the Lutheran merger efforts.

Columbus should recognize and admit its disunity, and seek the truth. The situation may indeed be disgraceful, but it is not new or unusual. When Melancthon threw the Lutheran churches into confusion after Luther's death, there were many dissenters and protesters. Many a dissenter hurt the cause by going to an opposite extreme and, while opposing one heresy, fell into another. Being opposed to the unionistic spirit can lead some into sinful isolationism, or an unecumenical spirit. Being opposed to the denials of an inspired Scripture can lead some to traditionalism and dead orthodoxy. Having taken a correct position in a controversy does not make any group infallible.

The topic at Columbus is the vital issue of the Church and true ecumenicity. Here above all a clear and good witness is needed throughout the world. But the strength of the witness will lie in its quality, not its quantity. It will be easy to unite in the condemnation of the false ecumenicity throughout Christendom. It will take the Holy Spirit to lead each one to search his own heart and receive with meekness the engrafted Word.

THE THINGS THAT COME TO PASS

G. SYDOW

"AND!"

In a recent book, "Steps To Christian Unity," a group of 24 essays by 24 clergymen of all confessions, edited by Father J. A. O'Brien of Notre Dame, theologian Karl Barth, of all people, speaks with greater clarity, honesty, and more realistically than the others. In answer to the question, "In your view, what is the greatest obstacle to reconciliation between the Reformed Churches all over the world and the Catholic Church?" He says, "I think the greatest obstacle could well be a very small word which the Roman Church tacks on to the end of every one of our propositions. This very small word "and." When we say Jesus, the Catholics say Jesus *and* Mary. We seek to obey only our sole Lord-Christ. The Catholics obey Christ *and* His earthly vicar, that is to say the Pope. We believe that the Christian is saved by the merits of Jesus Christ; but the Catholics add: *and* by his own merits, that is to say, his good works. We think that the only source of revelation is the scriptures; the Catholics add: *and* tradition. We say that the knowledge of

God comes from faith in His Word, as it is expressed in Scripture. The Catholics add: *and* from reason."

In this same book we find words written by Albert Cardinal Meyer which take our attention, "Both in the words of our Lord and of St. Paul we see the spirit of a severe attitude toward those who cause these scandals. The reason for this severity is ultimately none other than love, a jealous love, above all, for the purity of doctrine. The Apostles were made authorized witnesses, responsible for the preservation and the faithful transmission of that to which they were to testify; not only were they to transmit faithfully, but also to control what they have transmitted, that it may be preserved without alterations."

To Bible loving believers these are good words, but whatever the Cardinal meant with them is washed out by what he says in closing, "This ecumenical spirit should not restrict itself to our separated brothers, but should look beyond them to 'all people who acknowledge religious values.' It should look to the Jews, with whom we have a common bond in our spiritual father, Abraham; we who are spiritual Semites have a common heritage with the sons of Abraham who follow the law of Moses. This spirit also directs our attention toward the followers of Mohammed, who believe in the same God and share many of the same prophets as do we. It looks even farther, to all the Oriental religions which bear witness to the claims of the absolute Being upon whom we depend. Finally, it looks to those who are repelled by organized religion but who nevertheless acknowledge God as the Supreme Being,

explicitly or even implicitly by their respect for the true dignity of man. The true ecumenical spirit seeks whatever religious values and truths we may have in common with other men."

A LAYMAN ADMONISHES!

The May, 1966, issue of the Reader's Digest carries an article on the question, "Should the Church 'Meddle' in Civil Affairs?" We delayed reading it because we thought we already knew what would be said. This time we missed being a prophet by quite a bit. Here was something that sounded for the most part like the writing of a conservative Lutheran, CLC at that. What made it so startling was that it was written by a layman from a rather liberal church background, J. Howard Pew, of Sun Oil Co., president of the board of trustees of the United Presbyterian Church, and also an official in the National Council of Churches. He writes, "I do worry, however, when leaders of the church show signs of jeopardizing its power and influence by taking it away from its main mission. To be specific . . . I am concerned that many of the church's top leaders today . . . are sorely failing its members in two ways: 1) by succumbing to a creeping tendency to downgrade the Bible as the infallible Word of God, and 2) by efforts to shift the church's main thrust from the spiritual to the secular." Sentence after sentence is worth repeating. Among other things, the finger is pointed at do-gooding clergymen who engage in civil disobedience. Quoting a Senator, 'I have been particularly distressed by the actions of many of our clergy and other church leaders who justify their violation of federal, state and local laws on the

grounds that these are "bad" laws and that the only way to correct them is to break them. Once it has been stated that any law need not be obeyed unless it is a "good law," the beginning of an end to rule by law has been initiated.'" On U.S. churchmen's frantic social action a Church of England theologian is quoted, "It would be tragically ironic if the church, grown skeptical about God's power to redeem society by transforming human nature, were to fall into the same ideological error as communism and attempt to transform man by altering his environment."

"AS A MAN SOWETH!"

The latest quarterly of the Creation Research Society, January, 1966, brings a fine article by Dr. John N. Moore, Michigan State University, under the heading *Neo-Darwinism and Society*. Among other things, it demonstrates how the deteriorating behavior of Western nations follows out of a decided change in basic viewpoints and approach. "The denial of universals carries with it the denial of every transcending experience, such as absolute truth, God, absolute moral values. The denial of everything transcending experience means inevitably the denial of truth entirely. Thus there is no truth toward which we seek, but only immediate experience of the moment." This brings about that "man is left with nothing that transcends his experiences. He has no values, no morals; and his life becomes sheer practice without theory. Of course modern man secretly hungers for truth, truth that will set him free, but he consoles himself with the thought that life should be experimental. Modern man feels he should try all ideas

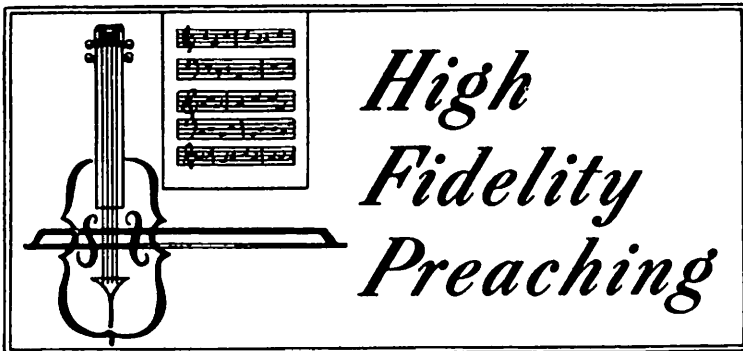
since he will acknowledge no basis or yardstick by which to evaluate any idea, except trial and error, which is strictly groping in the dark—an essentially irrational animal on the loose in nature.”

The writer then points out that once these propositions are set loose on civilization the very men that foster them are shocked at what develops. “Hence the speechlessness of some men of culture still extant in Western civilization when they are forced to witness the further rending of once transcending values of the worth of human life, full application of talents, sanctity of relations between male and female, and surrender of remnants of freedom of choice in exchange for decision-making by sycophants and self-less calculating machines.”

“Whether it is the rantings of the political demagogue or the uninhibited college or university student, the man of culture understands what is being done, but he cannot convey his under-

standing because he cannot convey the idea of sacrilege in the terms of materialism or scientific naturalism. As Weaver says, ‘His cries are not heard by those who in the exhilaration of breaking some restraint feel they are extending the boundaries of power and knowledge.’”

In conclusion belief in Christ is set forth as the superior approach and the solution to man’s problems. “To the mind of man which is steeped in error, Christ says, ‘I am the Truth.’ Christians know that Jesus Christ remains constant through the ages in offering salvation to those who answer His call for faithful acceptance. Only with His help can our good works with fellow human beings reach beyond the bounds of limited material dimension. Only with His help can man be lifted to heights above supposed salvation through crass evolutionary humanism, which proponents offer as a ‘new’ religion in place of worship of the God of the Trinity.”



C. THUROW

For the child of God Pentecost is a festival rich in comfort. It teaches that our risen Savior, who is now ascended to the right hand of His Father and rules over all things for the welfare of His Church, sends the Holy Spirit into the world to build the Church.

On the first Pentecost everything was calm. Suddenly, from nothing, God created a sound as though a tornado were roaring through the city. That mighty sound accomplished what God intended; it attracted people from all parts of Jerusalem.

And what did they see when they came running? Nothing but men, the humble disciples of Jesus. But what was that above their heads? Split tongues of flame, burning brightly, the outward sign by which the Holy Spirit showed His presence in a special way within these men.

The results were marvelous. Until now they had been frightened, hiding from the enemies of the Lord. Now they became fearless, ready to confess Christ to anyone. And the Holy Spirit fitted them for the task by giving them the ability to speak in any language to anyone from any nation in the world. Where is Peter, who had so cowardly and so vehemently three times denied that he knew the Lord? Over there preaching. Listen. "Him . . . ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; Whom God hath raised up . . ." And since that day the message of the risen Savior has rung throughout the world, the Holy Spirit working within that Word to kindle faith in the hearts of men. That is how our hearts also, have become temples of God and dwelling places of the Holy Spirit.

Anyone seeking music to bear out the Pentecost theme will find it in a cantata by J. S. Bach, No. 34, *O Everlasting Fire*. One sits spellbound through the introduction and first chorus as the piercing trumpets and the tympani enter again and again to picture the eternal Spirit kindling flames of love in our hearts. This portion is a movement from one of the Brandenburg Concertos, rewritten for this cantata, a good example of Bach's skill in adapting secular music to sacred use. Another bit of art to be noted: the bass voices always introduce the re-entry of the word "eternal" — firm, solid, underriding everything, our eternity is sure in the eternal Spirit.

The only recording of Cantata No. 34 is *MHS-568-M* or *568-S*, \$2.50 for either. This album is suggested as first choice because overside is a good recording of the great Easter Cantata

No. 4, *Christ Jesus Lay in Bonds of Death*. (LH:195)

Anyone looking further should try Pentecost Cantata, No. 174, *I Love the Almighty With Deepest Devotion*. One could sing its praises endlessly. The special appeal for me is the closing chorale, "Lord, Thee I Love With All My Heart." (LH:429) On the other side are two cantatas that will by no means disappoint, Nos. 89 and 189. This is *MHS-566*, mono only. Order either album from *Musical Heritage Society*, 1991 Broadway, New York 10023.

A good choral album has been brought to our attention, *Enchanting*, by the Korean Orphan Choir, *WORD-3340*, \$4, or *8340* at \$5. There are several emotional or Gospel type hymns, also several secular numbers very well done. But six of the sacred numbers (including Handel and Mozart) are a joy to hear. The training and precision of these children are remarkable. This record may be popular enough for the average music store to have it available for sample-listening.

LONDON RECORDS offers a rare album in a German import. From a series on old organs, this is *The Small Organ*. The various types played are regal, table, positiv, and cabinet. They were used for the home and small chapel. They preceded and developed alongside the great church organs.

In that lies the historical value of this album. Among the composers are Palestrina, Sweelinck, Frescobaldi, and Buxtehude (How Lovely Shines the Morning Star — LH:546). This is not dry history but living music, in a recording that reflects masterful engineering. It begs to be heard, especially by those interested in the development of the organ into the king of instruments that it is today. A descriptive sheet pictures each organ and lists all the stops, as well as the stops being used in each part of each selection. Order *DAS ALTE WERK AWT-9409-C* or *SAWT-9409-B*, \$5.79 for either.

C. THUROW

**CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION
TREASURER'S REPORT**

July 1, 1965 to May 1, 1966

RECEIPTS:	April, 1966	Total to Date
Offerings.....	\$ 9,318.69	\$ 72,068.16
Memorials.....	12.00	48.00
Revenues, Tuition.....	842.00	12,728.00
Revenues, Board & Room.....	2,728.00	23,253.00
Revenues, Other College.....	— — —	430.50
Interest Earned, 1964 & 1965.....	— — —	160.26
TOTAL RECEIPTS.....	\$12,900.69	\$108,687.92

DISBURSEMENTS:

General Administration.....	\$ 144.89	\$ 1,311.97
Capital Investments.....	323.00	3,730.00
Home Missions & Administration.....	3,428.15	33,147.29
Japan Mission.....	550.00	5,500.00
ILC Educational Budget.....	3,607.02	37,697.26
ILC Auxiliary Services Budget.....	3,772.36	28,579.94
ILC Extra-Budgetary (Prop. Ins.).....	281.00	281.00
Journal of Theology.....	— — —	368.45
Loan to the Spokesman.....	— — —	1,000.00
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS.....	\$12,106.42	\$111,615.91
Cash Balance (+) and Deficit (-) this Period.....	+\$ 794.27	-\$ 2,927.99
Cash Deficit July 1, 1965.....		-\$ 5,386.46
Cash Deficit May 1, 1966.....		-\$ 8,314.45

	April, 1966	Total to Date
ILC Classroom Building Fund.....	\$ 430.00	\$ 12,345.20

Respectfully submitted,
Lowell R. Moen, Treasurer
1309 7th Avenue N.W.
Austin, Minnesota 55912

Comparative Figures

	April	10 Months
Budgetary Offerings Needed.....	\$ 8,148.00 ^o	\$ 81,480.00
Budgetary Offerings Received.....	\$ 9,318.69	\$ 72,068.16
Surplus.....	\$ 1,170.69	
Deficit.....		\$ 9,412.84
Budgetary Offerings, '64 - '65.....	\$ 6,619.40	\$ 65,857.94
Increase '65 - '66.....	\$ 2,699.29	\$ 6,210.22

^oThese figures have been adjusted by subtracting \$4,500.00 from the budget, the amount for ventilators covered by the Classroom Building Fund offering.

Board of Trustees
L. W. Schierenbeck, Chairman

EXODUS

When Pharaoh definitely refused to hear Jehovah's ambassador, God dealt the final blow: He instituted the Passover, by which Israel was spared, and killed every firstborn of the Egyptians. Thus all legitimate heirs were destroyed and Egypt was practically wiped out; and a final gesture of defiance by Pharaoh sealed his doom.

June 1 - 12:1-13	The blood of a perfect lamb	156, 1-3
June 2 - 12:14-20	An everlasting sign and memorial	156,4-5
June 3 - 12:21-28	"What do you mean by this service?"	629,1-2
June 4 - 12:29-36	Kingship belongs to our Lord and His Anointed	219,1-3
June 5 - 12:37-42	"A night of watching by the Lord"	219,4-6
June 6 - 12:43-51	For the native and believing stranger	498,1
June 7 - 13:1-10	"Because of what the Lord did for me"	629,3-5
June 8 - 13:11-16	Consecrate every firstborn male	54,1
June 9 - 13:17-22	The pillar of cloud by day and fire by night	54,2-3
June 10 - 14:1-9	They went forth defiantly	262,1-3
June 11 - 14:10-18	"Stand firm and see the salvation of the Lord"	265,1-2
June 12 - 14:19-31	"He who sits in the heavens will laugh"	265,3-4
June 13 - 15:1-10	"The Lord has triumphed gloriously"	218,1-2
June 14 - 15:11-18	"And He shall reign forever and ever"	218,5-6

The children of Israel were now alone with their God — and could not stand in His sight by their own worth. In his steadfast and abiding faithfulness He bore with them and upheld them.

June 15 - 15:22-27	The oasis of the Lord, our Healer	422,1-2
June 16 - 16:1-12	Give us <i>this</i> day bread for <i>today</i>	422,3-4
June 17 - 16:13-21	Faithfulness breeds the worms of trouble	436,1-3
June 18 - 16:22-30	Man does not live by bread alone	436,4-5
June 19 - 17:8-16	Holding up the prophets' hands	496,3
June 20 - 18:13-27	All members of one body	496,4

When God announced the covenant of the Law, He did not thereby cancel the covenant of the Promise He had made with Abraham (Gal. 3:17-19). The Law was to serve as a schoolmaster until Christ (Gal. 3:24), hedging the Jews in like a wall to separate them from the influence of unbelievers and thus preserve them from decay (Eph. 2:14).

June 21 - 19:1-6	A kingdom of priests and a holy nation	244,1-2
June 22 - 19:10-15	Consecrate the people and set limits	244,3
June 23 - 19:16-25	The glory of the Lord for a sinful people	244,4
June 24 - 20:1-11	Love your God with all your heart	287,1-2
June 25 - 20:12-17	Love your neighbor as yourself	287,3-4
June 26 - 20:18-26	Wherever I cause my name to be remembered	287,5-6
June 27 - 23:14-17	You shall keep your feasts to <i>me</i>	287,7-8
June 28 - 24:1-8	Sprinkled with the blood of the covenant	287,9-10
June 29 - 24:12-18	The Law written for instruction	287,11-12

God prescribed to Israel every form of service: place, time, priesthood, and sacrifices. All these were to point the Jews to the promised Messiah.

June 30 - 25:1-9	The Lord loves a cheerful giver	398,1
July 1 - 25:17-22	"I will meet you from above the mercy seat"	398,2
July 2 - 26:31-35	The Holiest place of all—Behind the Veil	398,3
July 3 - 28:1-4	Beautiful garments for a consecrated priesthood	491,1
July 4 - 29:1-9	A sinful priesthood washed and anointed	491,2-3
July 5 - 31:12-18	"I, the Lord, sanctify you"	398,4

ILC Commencement Program

The faculty and graduating classes of Immanuel Lutheran College extend a cordial invitation to the following events:

June 2 (3:00 p.m. CDT) Class Day exercises with academic address.

These exercises will be held on the College campus.

June 2 (7:30 p.m. CDT) Commencement Concert at Messiah Lutheran Church.

June 3 (10:00 a.m. CDT) Commencement Service on the campus. In case of inclement weather the service will be held at Messiah Lutheran Church.

C. M. Gullerud, *President*

West-Central Delegate Conference

Place: Grace Lutheran Church, Valentine, Nebraska, H. Witt, Pastor

Time: June 21-22, 1966. Opening Service at 10:00 A.M., MST.

Communion Service, June 21, at 8:00 P.M.

Speaker: H. P. Bauer; Alternate, John Johannes

Agenda: The Theory of Evolution vs. Christianity, Karl Brandle. Outline Study of the Book of Acts with Practical Insights Applicable to the Work of the Church Today, Including Thoughts on Today's Social Gospel, Herbert Witt.

Kindly register promptly with the host pastor.

A. Schulz, *Secretary*

Minnesota Delegate Conference

Place: Grace Lutheran Church, Fridley, Minnesota, Carl Thurow, Pastor

Time: Sunday, June 19, 1966, 3:00 P.M.

Agenda: *Released Time*, Paul F. Nolting
Discussion of the Convention Prospectus

Alvin P. Sieg, *Secretary*

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

The Rev. Michael A. Sydow
4008 West Golden Lane
Phoenix, Arizona 85021

Ruth Schaller
304 N. Broad Street
Menkato, Minn. 56001

Seventh Annual Convention CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION

Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church

Spokane, Washington

August 11-16, 1966

Opening Communion Service — Thursday at 10:00 A.M.

Speaker: Pastor N. R. Carlson

Alternate: Professor John Lau

Convention Service — Sunday at 8:00 P.M.

Speaker: Professor John Lau

Alternate: Pastor Carl Thurow

Paul F. Nolting, *Secretary*