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Dear Brother:

I had really hoped that I would not invade your privacy with another edition of these yellow sheets before the leaves turn brown. However, I had so much material piled up in the southeastern corner of my room that I wanted to get away from the shadow of all these notes. I therefore decided to put these things on your desk — so that you can decide for yourself. They will probably fit better in your wastebasket than in mine. My own is filled with vague resolutions, Board minutes, and copies of unofficial journals.

While I was writing this, the little radio in the corner burst into the Praeludium in C-minor by Bach. It brought me up short. Perhaps I should be writing about other things rather than conventions, controversies and confusion. Suddenly I remembered something I had written ten years ago.

Confronted by Bach, the twentieth century man must be bewildered. The gap between the Rhapsody in Blue and the Mass in B-Minor is too great. But even more tragic is the amazement of the modern mind when it is confronted by Bach, the man of faith. What shall the new pagan do with a man who so magnificently fused high art and high religion? Or how can many modern Christians, accustomed to shoddiness, emotionalism and subjectivity in their religious life, understand a man who humbly accepts the great objective truths of Christianity and pours them into music which makes them live and breathe and march into the souls of men? That sort of thing is beyond us. We cannot love the music of Bach because we do not share the faith of Bach. In the truest sense of the word his approach was sacramental. He used the mechanics of music — the arduous task of composition, the limited but honest resources of the 18th century organ, the oboe and the harpsichord — as means to an end. Under his heart and hands, they became vehicles of a faith that used them to their highest potentiality. They now spoke of God, of life, of death, of faith, of hope, of atonement and forgiveness in terms so sure and magnificent that our anxious and questioning age hears only faint and far trumpets from a forgotten country.

Now for another journey to Detroit. Somebody tells me that the convention of the Missouri Synod in that great city this year will be a “crossroads convention”. I hate the word “crossroads”. The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod has been at so many “crossroads” during the past fifty years that the Pilgrim way of the Church seems to be nothing but a series of intersections with red lights both ways and the devil honking his horn behind us. After forty years of this I decline to be “crossroaded” by the church’s self-appointed traffic cops.

Nor do I like the word “crisis” any better. There are no more problems, opportunities, beckoning horizons, courageous changes, or challenges, but only “crises”. I for one refuse to be shunted from one crisis to another. Can we not — at least for a few years — do our work, quietly or stormily as may come, but with the majestic and magnificent assurance that in the life of the Church His ways are quiet and calm and very good. He will not fail, nor be discouraged, nor be disturbed by our momentariness and our brief and bleak sense of crisis and disaster.

However, and it is a big “however” — there are some things about the Detroit convention which deserve our attention and our prayers. It is not my task to thrust these yellow pages into convention decisions. I have an uneasy feeling, however, that we must finally face up to some basic issues. Whether we like it or not, the Missourian “isolation” (it was never really that) has ended. Only “the light under the bushel” theologians may still close their eyes to a stark imperative reality. The Lord of the Church has a destiny for us, and we may just come face to face with it at 8:10 p.m. — on a muggy summer evening in Detroit in His year of 1965. If we remember this, it will be a good convention.

I have also heard and read that there will be a big fight at Synod between “liberals” and “conservatives”. The use of these words puzzles me no end. I consult the dictionary and do not find any definition which would fit the situation in the Missouri Synod. I have finally decided that “liberals” are all persons who disagree with me and “conservatives” are all brethren who agree. This seems to be about the best and most useful definition.
This predicted fight at Synod will undoubtedly be big stuff for the newspapers. Now a real controversy over doctrine is always a good thing unless it obscures other basic tasks and if it is reduced to libel, name-calling and willful misunderstanding, or just plain hate. Example: One of the journals whose loyalty to Synod is demonstrated by its appeal to people not to give any more money for missions conducted by Synod, runs a reference to Missouri Synod "bosses". According to the article, the "big boss" is a Capone-like character whose name escapes me. What is journalistically and ethically interesting is that the basis for calling this brother "Boss" is due to the fact that a reporter up in Wisconsin who had interviewed him had to make his headline fit the space available, used the word "boss". The word "servant", "director", "leader", or "secretary" were too long for the headline. The word "boss" happened to fit, and the idea has now been happily taken over by one of our "crisis brethren". In the outside world this is what we call "name-calling". Perhaps we should resurrect the fine medieval phrase: "Cauta legenda" — which means that such things must be read with caution.

I am a member of Synod who reads the appealing "Memo to my Brethren" written sporadically by the President of Synod with a great deal of interest and appreciation. In the latest memo he refers to some of the problems which will confront the Detroit convention and says a few words about them. One of my colleagues read it in my office a few days ago, looked up from the paper and said, "This man has the real pastoral heart." This is probably the best description of the approach of our brethren who have been given the leadership of Synod in this hour.

Personally I can check on the contents from a personal point of view only at a place where the president refers to Valparaiso University and the contact of Synod with our work during the past few years. I should like to underscore the fact that the Praesidium of Synod has visited the campus twice during the past eighteen months, and the president himself has been on the campus several more times. Their concern for the doctrine and life of the University is real, pastoral and thoroughly Lutheran. To this fact many of our faculty members who have met with the leaders of Synod personally will testify very sincerely. Let no one say that they have not done their duty. They have done that — and have gone the second mile.

Now and then a grapevine report informs me that some brethren feel that our president moves too slowly. This always impresses me because my faculty and students have been telling me that about myself for twenty-five years — and my job is not nearly so heavy and wide and great as the leadership of Synod. Leading 2,500,000 souls in the paths of righteousness and rightness in these wayward days is a staggering task. If changes come, they must come slowly. Patience and the long view of the history of the Church dictate much thought, long prayer, and sharp awareness of the will of God for our times. The current president of Synod is a humble, honest, praying man, and I am willing to wager on that rare fusion of Godliness.

Notes on a Frayed Cuff: You will not believe this, but it is true. I have just returned from a panel discussion between Paul Tillich and some of my younger colleagues. This, of course, is credible. What is incredible is that the Great Hall of our Student Union was jammed as I have never seen it in ten years. No show, no movie, no exhibition, no party, and even no banquet has brought out so many students. They filled every chair, sat on the floor, stood four deep around the walls, and stretched into long lines out into the hall. The air was stifling and electric.

I stood in the rear of the hall, hidden by two basketball players, and watched the proceedings. On the platform our boys were really throwing curves at our distinguished visitor: "Are you Lutheran? Why are you a Lutheran? Are you a Christian socialist? What do you mean when you say, 'Religion is the substance of culture'? What do you think of Honest to God?" (His answer was, "Not much.")

And so on. Voice from the rear: "Aren't you afraid of letting such an arch heretic talk to your students? They will be ruined for life." The answer is: "No."

Seated on the floor beside me were two coeds busily taking notes. Whenever Tillich said something dubious, they shook the blonde hair out of their eyes and stopped taking notes. And — at least three-fourths of what he said was powerfully true and relevant. Coming to the children of the second half of the twentieth century, his voice was eloquent. Instinctively they knew that here was a man whom the moon and stars had not been able to launch down or out-think. When he talked, very slowly — about the coming of the Kingdom of God into our hearts and into our time and space, into life and history, the silence in the hall was almost tangible.

All this happened on a warm, spring afternoon on the day before our annual field day. I have often been somewhat critical of our younger generation, but something like this makes all things new again.

It is astonishing to note how often Catholic journals are using the phrases "siege mentality" or "Catholic ghetto" these days. They mean the conscious withdrawal of the Church from the on-going, teeming life of society either by reason of fear, of pride or just plain obscurantism. Question: How many of our current problems in Lutheranism are due to the same "siege mentality" or "Lutheran ghettos"? The first prize to the best answer to this question will be a life subscription to these yellow sheets.

One brother to another — speaking the truth in love: "Your position is un-Biblical, unpatristic, un-confessional, unliturgical, unintellectual and un-Lutheran." That takes care of that.
More and more brethren are complaining about the special cross of the ministry in the twentieth century — the proliferation of evening meetings. After a day of sick calls, confirmation classes, Sauer-braten waving from his new Cadillac, and possibly a half-hour checking next Sunday’s pericope to see if it will fit what he wants to say, the brother comes home and has to prepare either for the “Paul and Timothy Pinochle Club” meeting or the HTT (Holier Than Thou) Ladies Society. I believe that this is really one of the major problems in our post-modern ministry. Has anybody found a reasonable solution?

During my years I have seen about twenty families, some of them in parsonages — into whose life came a startling event in the little form of a “retarded” child. The word “retarded” means that for some mysterious reason God has not given the child the full equipment of a normal human being. There is only one exception to this. Their souls are normal — lost, redeemed, blood-bought, to be made ready for the heaven in which they will no longer be “retarded”.

I have long had the highest admiration for the men and women who devote their lives to the care of these “strange little ones”. If you ask: “Why does God permit such children to be born,” the answer is: “I really do not know.” Sometimes, I suspect, however, that it gives some of our brothers and sisters a chance to become saints. Year after year they carry on, assuredly with no hope of earthly reward. This, too, I have seen. Whole families have been bound together by the blessed task of caring for some such “little one” who will never know the world’s respect or love. These thoughts came to me as my colleague, Professor Oliver Graebner, presented the results of a survey of our great work at Bethesda Lutheran Home in Watertown, Wisconsin. This home has grown tremendously during the past few years. It is an example of the sort of thing I have been talking about. There are saints there who will be very close to the Throne. They will also never be alone. They will have with them these “little ones” whom they carried through a brief earthly pilgrimage and their preparation for eternity.

“Life” appears with a photograph of a four month old fetus on the cover. The editors knew what they were doing. The response to this particular journalistic coup was tremendous. It was, of course, an interesting story, highly scientific and accurate. Suddenly, however, it occurred to me that this was another reflection of our shallow age. There was no reference anywhere to the fact that that little lump of flesh in its mother’s womb is God the Creator in action. If it is not, why don’t we get a picture of an unborn monkey in Africa? Here is another evidence of the subtle, implicit heresy of our age. There really is nothing wrong with the picture — unless you slowly realize that it omits a basic dimension — the reflection of God the Creator, the human soul, and the preciousness of all life in His sight.

An eloquent tribute to one of our “Inner City Peace Corps” workers from a brother under whose direction our student did his work: “It may be difficult to evaluate Bob’s effectiveness in terms of statistical success — but if you could find time to talk to several hundred kids in the neighborhood — you would find that he symbolized the meaning of Christian love and friendship in the neighborhood. There are many, many whose contact with some services of our Church came through Bob. Many of you have had some share in Bob’s work. Through him your concerns for an immortal soul became incarnate in our parish.”

My alert colleagues are constantly placing on my desk examples of new discoveries in their respective fields. So it happened that I see in the April, 1965 issue of Nucleonics to which my colleague in Physics, Dr. Armin Manning, makes a contribution. The paragraph, however, which caught my particular attention read as follows:

“The He” sandwich-type silicon surface-barrier detector used in this study (ORTEC Model 780) depends on the reaction

\[ \text{He}^8(n, p)\text{H}^4(Q=0.764 \text{ Mev}) \]

The detectors are so arranged that the recoiling proton and triton will release a total energy equal to that of the incident neutron plus the Q value of the reaction. To do away with background or counts resulting from unwanted neutron reactions in the silicon, we use coincidence circuitry. The electronic circuitry comprised two ORTEC model 101 preamps, ORTEC Model 102 sum-coincidence unit and an RCL 512 analyzer."

This is really a very significant statement. I am sure you will wish to discuss it in detail at your next "Winkelkonferenz".

Back to Synod again:

Theophilus really worries me these days. I suspect that he has become ecclesiastically ambitious. He is constantly writing about the coming Synodical convention at Detroit in June. Even though his chance to be delegate from Circuit 13 does not come until 1981, he seems to be queerly interested in 1965 . . .

“Dear O.P.:

I have always taken a kind of modest pride in the fact that I have never been nominated or elected to any office in the Church. Not that there is anything wrong in holding an office in the
Church; it's just that, with all of the offices and committees and boards and what-not, managing not
to get elected to anything was a kind of challenge, like keeping one's virginity. You know you're
going to get caught sooner or later, but every escape is a kind of feather in your cap.

The way I managed it was to write something controversial at least once a year. By contro-
versial I do not mean heretical, just controversial. What had to be established, you see, was that
I was not safe. To establish that, in our Church or any other, it is not necessary to deny the Doc-
trine of the Trinity or the efficacy of the Sacraments. It is enough simply to put yourself vociferously
on record in favor of (or dead set against) some adiaphoron such as Roman collars or Sunday
closing laws or censorship of the movies. This I would do — my most recent effort was a letter to
the editor of the Witness, strongly endorsing the idea of titling our district presidents bishop and (get
this!) the President of Synod the Presiding Bishop — and then go back to my labors in the quiet
confidence that nobody would try to drag me away from them to any meeting 'on the Synodical
level.' And they never did. Just for the heck of it, a couple of times I had friends suggest my name
for nomination to some office or other, but nothing ever came of it.

Well, guess I pushed my luck too far or got overconfident or something. Anyway, today in
the mail I got this form from the Committee on Convention Nominations informing me that they
wish to nominate me for membership on the Committee on Amalgamation of the English District
which, I understand, is the most venerable of all of Synod's committees, having been established
long before there was even a thought of the Board for Higher Education or the Board of Parish Edu-
cation or the Board for World Missions. And what bothers me is that I am tempted. Worse than
that, I know already that I shall succumb, for as youth has passed into middle age I have begun
to find disinvolvement, like virginity, more of a burden than a glory. I suppose, if the truth were
told, that I have always wanted acceptance. I once thought that I could have it on my own terms.
I have learned that I can not. And I have learned that I am willing to pay what it costs.

You will say: 'Theophilus has sold out.' And I will say that you are both right and wrong.
In a sense that no cynic could ever understand, every man does have his price and it has been
my experience that no man sells himself more cheaply than the man who insists that he can not be
bought. With my eyes wide open, I am exchanging some of my free time and some of the reputa-
tion I have made for 'independence' for a chance to toss a lance in that little company of the Church
of Jesus Christ which we call the Missouri Synod. I am making the exchange because I have
come to the conclusion that if one has evidently not been called as prophet, priest, or king he can
at least bend his back to the lighter burdens of the Church, and, in so doing, perhaps release a
potential prophet, priest, or king for his ministry. And if his willingness to take on these little
chores gains him some acceptance by the brethren, is it a small thing to be accepted by sons and
dughters of the King?

Of course, I haven't been elected yet. So perhaps, like the lady in the commercials, I shall turn
out to be only half safe. At any rate, I invite you to consider the implications of the fact that I could
even be nominated for an office. It sort of shatters the old stereotype of the Missouri Synod, doesn't
it?

I am sure that you can understand why I like Theophilus. He's nuts all right, but in a nice, humble
way. If you are a delegate to Detroit, I hope you will cast your vote for him — for whatever he's run-
ning for. He will be a fearless defender of his views . . . .

Cordially,
Theophilus"

* * *

Culinary Note: This business of supporting the preacher by gifts in kind was — and is — a tradi-
tion with both good and bad sides. In many cases it was — and is — an honest, loving, sharing of
food and other things with the "Herr Pastor". Deacon Sauerbraten slaughtered several hogs each
year and the preacher always shared in the results — and often it was more than the feet or the ribs.
I still remember a cellar in a parsonage in Western Canada which was stocked with rows and rows
of pressed duck, vegetables, fruits and other good things.

On the other hand, I have often heard a brother's wife express profound resentment over the fact
that she had to "oh and ah" over gifts of chicken necks and hand-me-down clothes. I recall that some
farmers in Central Illinois were regularly surprised by the faithful activity of their hens in spring. They
had more eggs than they could use or sell profitably. The result? The first batch went to the "Herr
Pastor". If there were still some left, they were shipped to the seminary at Springfield. I can still hear
my good friends at the Sem come out of the dining hall cackling for weeks at a time. I recall a parson-
age into which we moved more than forty years ago which was so solidly stuffed with baked beans —
there must have been a sale somewhere because many of the cans were dented — that years went by
before we could look a baked bean in the eye.

I presume that by now this custom has succumbed to urbanization, super markets and higher sal-
aries. In one way, of course, I regret this. The quantity and quality of the gifts was often used by our
fathers as a measure of sanctification. There was a close relationship between the degree of holiness
and the quality of the eggs. For example, there was in my Grandfather Hueschen's "Begleitschreiben"
provision that in addition to his $300 annual salary the "Vorsteher" (deacons) were to supply him
with wood. This was no small order; he had a large house and there was a stove in every room.

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provision that in addition to his $300 annual salary the "Vorsteher" (deacons) were to supply him
with wood. This was no small order; he had a large house and there was a stove in every room.
Normally, on cold winter days, each afternoon would find him making his sick calls. He usually walked because Hans, the parish horse, was a contemporary of Dr. Walther and got the chills on cold days. This was, therefore, the logical time — during his absence — for some of the deacons to deliver their share of the wood. They could drop it and run. Grandfather Hueschen would come down as dusk came down over the "Friedhof" on the hill, take one look at the new pile of wood in the barnyard and say: "Das hat nun wieder der elende Schmidt gebracht. Der liebe Gott hat ihm gesagt er soll tellen, war er hat; er tellt aber nur was er uebrig hat." Translation for the younger brethren: "This wood comes from Schmidt. God told him to share what he has; however, he shares only what he has left over." Note: It is a curiously linguistic, cultural, and nationalistic fact that English has no exact equivalent for "der elende Schmidt" or even for "der liebe Gott".

All this was brought on by a report in the New York Times that a young Anglican vicar's wife had published an article in which she advised "Never Marry a Cleric." "I had high-minded visions of entering with my husband to the great work of converting the world, (who doesn't at 21), but here I am surrounded by four children, tied to the house, expected to turn up at every cat-hanging and feeling like a widow as my husband is always on duty.

I also resent the fact standard. A clergy wife is expected to run the conventional things, turn up at church and every other connected social affair whatever her domestic circumstances may be. It is often extremely difficult with a young family. One receives no encouragement from managing it with plenty of blame when one does not. Ordinarily a woman has a right to share her husband's life but for the clergy wife this has been reduced to an occasional privilege." I really wonder if she is right. I know that occasionally I get a letter from Mrs. Theophilus in which she writes: "Theophilus is too busy. He told me to write." I always read the next few paragraphs hurriedly because I know the good part is coming. It always begins: "As far as I am concerned —" At this point my attention quotient goes up and I read with a great deal of interest and no little approval. Perhaps I should say that too often she refers to some hidden grief which has touched her family. I become aware of the fact that she does not like to trouble Theophilus with some of these problems and that she has very few people in whom she can confide; so she writes to a dim, dumb, and distant figure. Perhaps there should be a separate set of counselors for pastors' wives.

Notes on a Frayed Cuff: Have you ever noticed that many great sentences of Holy Writ are really great because they include a single word which is totally unexpected, completely strange, and perfectly right? For example: "The truth shall make you free." That last word is startling. As a sinner and a child of God I was expecting something entirely different. "The truth shall make you" — possibly faithful, obedient, wise — but not "free."

Another example: "The just shall live by faith." The natural man in me expects "the just shall live by his goodness, by his strength, by his wisdom." — But no, the word is "faith." I would be interested in having you send other examples of the remarkable and unpredictable exactness of many Biblical phrases and sentences. The entire matter would make an interesting subject for a conference paper.

Footnote to history: For better or for worse, Lutherans have come a long way since the Civil War in being more clearly a part of the American scene. Over the years, faithful or faithless, we have adopted many of the mores of the American community. Some of us now love big deals and big stuff — others must have the latest car — some have developed a myopic faith in Education (Always capitalized) — the Martin Luther Ladies Aid Society discusses precisely the same things as the John Wesley Women's Group — and so on.

In one area, however, admittedly a minor one, we have lagged behind. We still have a curiously naive, serf-like worship for "Government" no matter how bad it is. I have been reminded of this at a thousand conventions — lay, clerical, young people — or any other group. Here is the annual convention of the Lutheran Bar Tender and Mixologist Association. All day long the assembled delegates have listened to eloquent speakers, church officials, learned professors, well-known churchmen. Their response has been polite and cool. They applaud sparsely and obediently — and proceed to the next matter.

And then inevitably the great moment comes. The chairman announces: "We had planned to have the privilege of having with us this morning the mayor of this great city, the Honorable B. B. Bum-bie. He cannot be with us. He has, however, sent a fine substitute, Mr. Houndog, the assistant dog-catcher of this fine community." Then we all rise and applaud vehemently. A non-descript character ambles out from the wings: "It is hard to for me to tell you how bad Mayor Bumble feels that he cannot be with you." Translation: His honor has a hang-over. "He is confronted with weighty problems." Translation: His honor is trying to figure out why he tried to draw to an inside straight last night. "He has to spend today reviewing recent developments." Translation: He is reviewing the fact that he took that eighth martini last night. "He is also pondering problems in the administration of justice in this great city." Translation: The mayor's wife got a ticket for speeding from a hostile police judge.

And so on. Mr. Houndog is greeted by waves of applause. Moral: This is not what is meant by "give unto Caesar".

Reactions to the first two issues of our new synodical paper, The Lutheran Witness Reporter: "The
closing paragraphs

A few random notes for an address presented to the counselors of the English District under the title
"The Counselor as Pastors' Pastor": The good counselor must constantly be aware of the fact that the
difficulties of a brother are all spiritual and theological. There are many reasons for this. Our theology
of the church is too vacillating. There is a constant swinging of the pendulum between emphasis on
a) the Una Sancta — the Body of Christ, b) Christendom, c) The Lutheran Church — Missouri
Synod. It is difficult to find any consistency even in Luther and Pieper on this particular question.
Perhaps the best approach is the clear statement in Augustana VIII.

As a result of this lack of clarity in our theology of the church we have an unclear theology of the
ministry. It is based a) on a mixture of selected Scripture passages, particularly in Paul; b) the
democratic idea confined largely to America; and c) extension of the universal priesthood.

The divine mandate to the ministry is the Gospel — "Doctrina, gratia, et justitia fidei." The call
to the public service of the Church is based on the divine mandate "Go ye". The pastor is not really
a servant of the Church, much less of the congregation, but of the Word. His task and dignity (Wuerde)
come from the Word to which he and to whom he must be obedient. This is basically the Lutheran ap-
proach to the Holy Ministry. Every Sunday morning my brethren say: "I, as a called and ordained
servant of the Word" — not of anything else in the world.

We have no clear theology of obedience. We know that it is to the Word but we are often at a
loss as to how it is to be worked out in humanness. Luther: "Four things which guarantee order
in the church — doctrine, discipline, sacraments and useful ceremonies — note the word discipline—." Cal-
vin agrees entirely, basing his approach on Ephesians 4:11-13.

Why all this emphasis on a Theology of obedience? It is perfectly clear that our loss of this virtue
in the holy ministry makes the counselor's job tremendously difficult. We have given attention to a
dubious emphasis on freedom and some form of democracy. This we have absorbed by osmosis from
the atmosphere which surrounds us. It is therefore necessary for us to find a solid theological under-
girding for the problems and opportunities of the post-modern ministry. We have noted that the prob-
lems of the post-modern world are largely loneliness — the sudden recognition of being a child of the
"diaspora", and preaching the Word to a hostile culture.

Often there are existential tensions which are built-in because they are essentially between the in-
herent value of human pursuits in the present, on the one hand, and their ultimate insignificance, on the
other. For this reason my brethren have shown an increased interest in eschatology. More than any-
one else in time and space they are in the world but not of the world. The ultimate mark of dead ortho-
doxity is always "denying with our lives what we would not think of denying with our lips." This is our
problem.

Dangerous years in the holy ministry are between the ages of 30 and 45. Somewhere during these
years the cold, chilling realization comes that we have not lived up to our early dreams at the seminary.
We begin to know that we are not Jeremias come to judgment.

It is at this particular point that the counselor is to enter the life of his brethren with spiritual con-
solation and theological strength. He can do much to make the remainder of their ministry on earth
vital and challenging and thoroughly happy.

Once more the counselor can tell him that his fathers in God were Isiah and Jeremiah, Peter and
Paul, Augustine and Luther. Once more the counselor can remind him that only because of his mes-
sage does God permit the world to roll on its way. Despite all the anxieties and evil in the world, the
flames on our altars will not die, and the lights in the sanctuaries will not be quenched by flood or storm.
Even our sad and disappointed brother lives forever in the reflected glory of Him whose free and
happy slave he is.

Have a peaceful summer

O. P. Kretzmann

P.S. I should like to repeat the invitation extended to any brother, his family, or his lay delegate
who may be able to stop on our campus on the way to or from Detroit. No cost, no obligation, no
strings — just two thousand empty beds in our dormitories. Theophilus is bringing his wife, four
children, and three aunts and uncles. Just write to Professor A. C. Koester at Valparaiso Univer-
sity, and we shall be happy to have you as our guests.

O.P.K.