December 1957

O.P. Kretzmann
Valparaiso University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.valpo.edu/campus_commentary

Recommended Citation
https://scholar.valpo.edu/campus_commentary/19

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by the University Archives & Special Collections at ValpoScholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Campus Commentary by an authorized administrator of ValpoScholar. For more information, please contact a ValpoScholar staff member at scholar@valpo.edu.
My dear Brother:

You will not believe it, but my administrative colleagues have been haunting me for another edition of these random notes. They really feel — the loyal, insane souls — that reading these yellow sheets may be a welcome relief in the Advent and Christmas season. I am sure that we have no illusions about the matter, but I must confess that notes have been piling up here and there and that it is about time for another intrusion into the quiet sanctity of your study.

As this is written the first faint sounds of Christmas are in the air over Main Street and on the campus. It will be the first Christmas in the history of mankind with Sputnik whirling overhead. Just what this invasion of outer space means for the life and thought of our children is still beyond comprehension. Perhaps it will require a new and greater appreciation of the immensity of the creative activity of God while we continue to remember that His redemptive activity was concentrated on this little planet in the person of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Perhaps there is such a thing as a "Theology of Sputnik" which some of us ought to subject to careful evaluation. More about that later.

University News Section: Our total enrollment for the current semester is 2741. Approximately 2400 are on the campus at Valparaiso. The others are at St. Louis, Fort Wayne, Chicago, and various extension centers. This is, of course, by far the highest enrollment in the history of the University.

We have become members of the College Entrance Examination Boards, and all our entering freshmen will be required to take these examinations this year. We are one of approximately two hundred schools in the nation which now have this requirement. The examination will be confined to aptitude rather than achievement, and will accurately and objectively measure the ability of our entering students. I am sure you will agree that this is good stewardship from every point of view. If we ask the members of the Church to contribute to the support of the University we must see to it that the contributed funds are used just as effectively and efficiently as possible.

I am happy to report to you that Valparaiso University has become one of forty schools in the country which have been granted materials for a sub-critical nuclear reactor from the Atomic Energy Commission. This is a very important forward step in the development of our work in the natural sciences. For some time I have felt that the instruction in nuclear physics, as well as the research involved, should at least partially be in the hands of Christian scholars. This has now happened, and I am exceedingly happy over this recognition of our work in the Department of Physics.

Much of our time this year is being given to an evaluation of our work in the Department of Religion. It is my hope that our instructors in the department will come up with a plan which will make our formal instruction in Religion even more effective.

The chapel is now rapidly nearing the last stages of work. The roof has been completed and the first glass is now being placed in the hope that it will be ready before the winter weather strikes us.

Footnotes to History Section: Ordinarily this would be the news section, but some of my notes are so old that they assume the nature and character of minor footnotes to some historic events which have occurred during the past six months.

Footnote 1. On a warm Sunday afternoon in May I took off for Fort Wayne to be a spectator at the formal installation of nineteen instructors at our new Senior College. It was a beautiful, impressive, historic ceremony. In one hundred and ten years the Missouri Synod has never installed nineteen professors at one time. (An irreverent brother out in the hall whispered: "One at a time is bad enough, but nineteen — this is unthinkable.") Nevertheless, it was worth watching. There was first of all the magnificent setting of historic old St. Paul’s, the mother church of Fort Wayne, and one of the few remaining great parish churches in the entire country. There are not many left now in 1957 — Holy Cross in St. Louis; Trinity at St. Joseph, Michigan; St. Lorenz at Frankenmuth; St. Paulus at San Francisco — whose life and work and physical appearance reach far back into the nineteenth century. Worship at St. Paul’s is always a stirring experience. The people sing, the choirs believe that the Lord of Hosts is to be worshiped fortissimo, and its preachers have always been eloquent. At this particular service there was even a trumpeter who descanted above the melodies of the choir and lifted my aging frame out of the seat where I was resting at ease in Zion.

It was an impressive experience. There was more than the normal complement of synodical dignitaries, including all the presidents of our synodical institutions of higher learning. The service itself was conducted with beautiful order and dignity. It reflected careful planning and a fine awareness of the Lutheran liturgical tradition. After the rite of induction all nineteen instructors knelt before the altar while
the rest of us prayed for divine benediction upon their work. The President of Synod said a few words to them in which to my silent joy he emphasized the qualities of love and humility, virtues which in academic communities are too often conspicuously absent.

...... Admittedly the Senior College is a great experiment, although not as great as some of the brethren seem to feel. Its experimental character, for example, does not lie primarily (as so many have supposed) in its departure from the traditional 8-4-4 pattern of American education. Many educators have long doubted the wisdom of the plan which has so long dominated the educational scene, and there are scores of experimental changes in the process right now. The accrediting agencies themselves are encouraging these excursions into new chronological arrangements of the complex process of education. We need not worry about that part of it.

...... The experimental nature of the Senior College is centered in another area. It lies in the open and intelligent recognition of the fact that the modern ministry is a hugely complex and staggeringly demanding profession. Of course, it always has been from the day that Peter stood up and preached to thousands without a loud speaker system. It has only become more evident in our broken, bewildered century. The Senior College must offer an intellectual and spiritual training on the highest level. Here, if not before, our future pastors must hear and feel the need for great theology, acquire a passion for souls, a driving sense of vocation, a sense of the eternally relevant validity of the Gospel. They must learn to face the aristocracy of the mind with the democracy of the soul. The languages and the sciences must walk hand in hand with meekness and lowliness of heart.

...... It will be an exciting and thrilling task. I am certain that you will join me in a daily petition for the brethren who have now begun their work. What they do or fail to do will mean much to every last one of us — and to our children and children's children.

Footnote 2. The Convention of the Lutheran World Federation at Minneapolis in August: I wandered up there in no official capacity whatsoever. This is therefore a worm's eye view of the entire convention. Perhaps I should say in the first place that it was amazingly well organized. The American know-how was evident all over the place.

...... The proceedings began on Sunday evening with a procession which again emphasized the tremendous liturgical variations in the Lutheran Church — all the way from gray flannel suits to robes which were indistinguishable from the vestments worn by a Roman Archbishop. In order to see the whole thing I had to imitate Zacchaeus and climb half way up a lamp post. It was perfectly clear that Lutherans by and large still do not know how to march in procession. They get too self-conscious about it. On the other hand, let it be said that even the most skeptical observer had to be impressed by the fact that here was the largest non-Roman church in Christendom and the only one which reaches into every corner of the world. In some ways it was thrilling.

...... There were occasional grim reminders of the kind of world in which we live — the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia — the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia — but always in parenthesis "in exile." After almost two thousand years of Christianity there are still Christian churches which are under the cross of persecution just as much as the primitive church was nineteen hundred years ago.

...... Perhaps the most interesting feature of the entire convention were the theological discussion groups which met almost every afternoon. A friendly brother slipped me a press pass which enabled me to wander around freely. Let it be said that our own theological professors — ten or twelve of them — did exceedingly well. My impression was that the theological discussions followed quite a definite pattern. The American theologian said: "This is the way it is." The German theologian said: "It is right both ways and we must think dialectally." Lest, however, I leave the wrong impression, let it be said immediately that there was some very good theology evident throughout the meetings. In fact, the good theology far outweighed the bad. The interesting thing was that the good theology was highly concentrated in the leaders of the Lutheran World Federation and most of the essayists.

Footnote 3. It is evident that we are living in a civilization of dialogue, of questions and answers. This is also true of the Church. It is for this reason that these conferences are so valuable. The ecumenical encounter must always be dialogue so that out of the meeting of eternal truth and possible error, the truth, by the power of God the Holy Spirit, will emerge victorious.

Footnote 4. It becomes increasingly evident, too, that the answers to some questions depend entirely upon the way the question is put. One good brother called my attention to the fact by telling me the story of the Roman priest who appealed to the Pope for permission to smoke while he was praying. The answer came back quickly: "No." After a few months he wrote again and asked whether he could pray while he was smoking. The Pope's answer was: "Yes." Perhaps you had better take another look at that. There is a moral in it . . . Another somewhat irreverent brother observed at the end of one of the discussions that the German theologians can go deeper, stay down longer, and come up muddier than any other group in the world.

Footnote 5. Now and then I ran across a false sense of values. For example, I was standing in the hall one day when I heard a woman say in a hushed and reverent tone: "Here comes Dr. Ungesund. He is a big man in our church — one of the greatest that we have ever had." I looked, and discovered that I happened to know Dr. Ungesund quite well. He is a climber, and office seeker, a Nichtsnutz, who got where he is by never saying anything controversial or doing anything . . . He is now director of Martian missions in his own churchbody and he has a speech — a sad and eloquent one — about the Macedonian "call" from the Martians. By the way, have you ever thought of the fact that the poor anonymous Macedonian whom Paul saw in a vision must wonder at the number of times he has been used to get a larger share
Enrollment in the Youth Leadership Training Program jumped over 100 per cent at the beginning of its second year on the Valparaiso university campus. The program is designed to provide full-time youth workers for different fields of church work.

****

The enrollment report for the Fall Semester, 1957, revealed that Valparaiso university has a record-breaking 2360 on-campus students. Of the total, the College of Arts and Sciences has the largest number, 1829 students. The School of Law maintains its 1956 figure with 83 students, including two women. The College of Engineering registration breakdown totals 441 men and 7 women.

****

Representatives from 70 different Lutheran colleges and universities of various synods throughout the United States met on the Valparaiso university campus October 5 and 6 for the annual conference of the Association of Lutheran College Faculties. The general theme of the 1957 conference was "The Christian Liberal Arts College in a Scientific Culture." Dr. Frances O. Schmitt, head of the department of biological research at Massachusetts Institute of Technology was keynote speaker.

****

Three major staff changes have taken place in the Valparaiso university administration to keep pace with the continued growth and expansion of the school. Dr. Allen E. Tuttle, former associate professor of English, was named Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Shirley K. Flynn, former associate professor of physical education, was appointed Acting Dean of Women. Richard P. Koenig was appointed Athletic Director, succeeding The Rev. Karl Henrichs whose public relations experience was demanded in the university Department of Development.

****

Valparaiso university physicists Manuel M. Bretscher and Armin W. Manning announced November 1 that the Lutheran university will be the first university in Indiana to receive a loan of nuclear source materials from the Atomic Energy Commission. The elements will be used to construct a sub-critical reactor for nuclear education purposes. The loan to Valpo was the second of its kind by the AEC to a private denominational school, the first being given to Catholic university in Washington, D.C.

****

The Wheat Ridge Foundation has awarded seven full-tuition scholarships to students majoring in social work at Valparaiso university during the 1957-58 school year.

****

A recent survey project concerning post-graduation placement of Valparaiso university students reveals that 20 per cent of the present faculties in high schools of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod are Valparaiso graduates. During the current semester there are 321 students enrolled in education courses preparing for teaching on the secondary level and 216 students majoring in elementary education.

****
of a synodical budget? I must confess that I have used him, too. He is so handy — and if there is one thing we like, it is missions among the Macedonians. Our own contemporary Macedonians may be only a handful of people in Podunkville or Whistle-stop, but they always are good for an extra chunk of synodical money. While I am talking about that, — I am beginning to compile a list of worn phrases which should no longer be used in our church. Certainly one of them is "Macedonian call." Perhaps another is "in our circles," which is usually a smoke screen for organizational pride or intellectual laziness.

... Back to the Lutheran World Federation: If some of these remarks sound slightly skeptical and irreverent, I do not mean them to be. These are just some very belated footnotes to an event which was probably the most impressive many of us had seen in our lifetime. The Lutheran Church in the world is by and large in much better shape than many of us had expected.

Footnote 6. In September I spent twenty-four hours at the Fiscal and Visitors' Conference in St. Louis. In preparation for the meeting I faithfully read the volume of agenda — an amazing and awe-inspiring document. Here in cold type, and even colder figures, the whole panorama of the world and of the work of the Church in the afternoon of the twentieth century was present. I must confess that I really studied it because I wanted to see where all the money goes. I must also confess that I was really impressed, because I came face to face with a very high-powered, efficient organization. There were, of course, some occasional evidences of ecclesiastical boondoggling, too many meetings, too much printed material, too much busy work. Perhaps we should remember again that all these budgets, except possibly for Higher Education, must finally be measured by their results in the local parish. That is where the water hits the wheel. Despite the necessary and sometimes frightening development of our machinery I believe that we can say that it is effective and that it is functioning well. By the way, I am glad to see the gradual but sure rehabilitation of the office of the Visitor. Here, too, is where in the synodical organization the water hits the wheel. A good Visitor (I still like the dignified German version) must be a pastor's pastor and a shepherd's shepherd. The shepherds are sometimes harder to handle than the sheep. I know that our synodical leaders will continue to emphasize the central significance of the office of the Visitor.

Something New: During the past few months I have had several dismaying reports that these epistles are being read by some of the good ladies who, for better or for worse, have married some of the brethren to whom these letters are addressed. I have found the news vaguely disquieting. If it is true in any considerable measure, I have a new, highly intelligent and very wise audience. My first reaction was to mark these scribblings "Personal and Confidential", but I immediately realized that it is Mrs. Theophilus who empties the wastebasket and who would therefore see this stuff eventually. Upon further inquiry among wise and reflective brethren I learn that if these remarks were labeled "Personal and Confidential" the natural curiosity of women, which extends even to preachers' wives, would double my readers over night. Further meditation led to the conclusion that it might be well to face the situation squarely and honestly and to include a section which would be specifically addressed to the good (and often great) women whose contribution to the day by day life of the Church is noted fully and completely only by the recording angel. In fact he (and his Lord) is the only one who can rightly measure their work because so much of it is completely unseen, unheard, and unsung. So much of it, too, includes not doing things which human beings in other walks of life would normally do: e.g., tell off Mrs. Sauerapfel when she insists that the pastor is getting too much salary; e.g., refuse to make the salad for every supper conducted by the Ladies' Aid, the Altar Guild, the Men's Club, the Women's Auxiliary, the Bowling Club, the Happy Mothers' Club, the Adult Class, and the Delinquent Fathers' Fraternity; e.g., scream at the top of her voice when the Vorstehers refuse to repair the sagging porch on which Theophilus, Jr. sprained his ankle yesterday.

... It is agreed then that these epistles will occasionally contain sections especially written for the women of our parsonages. At the suggestion of several we begin this special feature with a question and answer box. These are actual problems which have appeared in the mail during the past six months. Item: "My Aunt Minnie gave me a mink stole last year. Can I wear it to church next Sunday?" Answer: "Yes. Call the District President on Saturday night and tell him that your husband is interested in another call." Item: "Can I resign from the Ladies' Aid for any Scriptural reason?" Answer: "No. But if your doctor could measure your blood pressure before and after every meeting you might find a valid reason." Item: "My husband has been preaching some very good sermons lately. Shall I tell him?" Answer: "No. The shock might be too great." Item: "Shall I accompany my husband to the next District Convention?" Answer: "Yes. You will meet some nice guys who are in worse trouble than you." Item: "Yesterday Deacon Sauerbraten chased Theophilus, Jr. off the school playground. Junior now wants to study for the ministry so that he can throw Sauerbraten out of the Church. Do you think this is a proper motivation?" Answer: "Knowing Deacon Sauerbraten, I would say 'Yes'." And so forth. Two letters encouraging the continuation of this feature will make it a permanent part of our work.

Now Concerning the Collection: Voice from the brethren in the rear: "I knew it. Here we go again." No,—not quite. I just want to say that our appeal last year, based on our tragic loss in the chapel — auditorium fire, really brought the brethren rallying around. President Behnkens's appeal for help on our behalf raised the response by approximately eighty-five per cent. Years ago a wise old brother said to me: "We (the Missouri Synod) always respond to need." That worries me. Last year our appeal to the brethren for help in meeting our budget had a quality of drama which is no longer present. A fire is more dramatic than the continuing need of a student for financial assistance; the sometimes tragic need of a faithful member of the faculty who has an unexpected and sudden hospital bill; the need for books, equipment, salary raises, lights and sidewalks; all the myriad needs of a growing institution. They are drama-
tic too, but only in a way which requires the long view and a steady continuing purpose and devotion. So — if you can persuade your good people to stand by us to the same extent they did last year you will be contributing even more. This will be not for the recovery of losses which have been sustained but for the long future and the beckoning years. Our appeal, therefore, is to please help us again to the same extent and in the same measure with which you helped us last year.

And Now to Christmas: Perhaps it will be sufficient this year to remind ourselves of some of the great, holy, and lasting things which appear most brilliantly and sharply when quiet comes down over the world on Christmas Eve. Bethlehem is still the dwelling place of the permanent things in life.

**PEACE**

Perhaps the first sound that reached the ears of the Child in the manger was the song of the choristers over the hills of Bethlehem: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men". . . . A prayer and a prophecy . . . A prayer that the hands of the Child, so soon to be torn by nails, would take hold of the hearts of men . . . A prophecy that those who would bring their hearts to Him would have peace . . . Tonight as the eyes of Christendom turn toward the manger, that prayer has become more anxious and immediate . . . It is still possible for men to have peace through Him who ended the war between God and man . . . The world may have lost peace, but God has not lost it . . . It has come back into the world over the strange road of the manger.

**HOLINESS**

With the Child, complete and perfect holiness came into the world of men for the first and the last time . . . God did not become man to make us contented with the world . . . He came to make us discontented with the world which now is . . . He came to give us the final revelation of the world to come . . . He came to talk about a pearl of great price, a wedding garment of incomparable beauty, a fair and real hope on our black horizon . . . Listen for a moment as the Child become man prays on the night before His death, John 17:19-23: "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their Word, that they may all be one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. And the glory which Thou has given Me I have given unto them, that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that Thou didst send Me and lovedst them even as Thou lovedst Me." . . . Note the constant repetition of the word "one." . . . We have been made one with God through faith in the redeeming work of Him who lay in the manger, who came to bring us into the sunlight of His holiness . . . to make us His family and to take us to live in an eternal Bethlehem . . .

**LOWLINESS**

Among the dumb beasts God was born . . . As the world turns now toward the worship of power, I must remember that the first worshipers of the Incarnate Word were not the great and mighty, not the rich and noble . . . The oxen and sheep were His company, and the shepherds were His congregation . . . . No power, no sword, no bombs, no guns, no books, no money . . . The mysterious lowliness of God . . . Just before Christmas a few years ago Heywood Broun died . . . His last article was a Christmas story of the Wise Man who halted and delayed the richly laden caravan wending its way out of the East on its journey in search of Him who was born King of the Jews.

He came hurrying back to his impatient companions, holding in his hands a long-kept, paint-scarrd, tin, tumbling, tiny toy.

"But we have gifts fit for a King," his companions protested. "You have gold, frankincense, and myrrh for the King," answered the third Wise Man. "This is for the Child at Bethlehem." . . .

**POWER**

Bethlehem is the dwelling place of a different power . . . The first infant cry of the Child was the battle challenge of the Prince of Peace . . . A few years later four men wrote the story of the 100 days about which God decided to tell us something . . . They are the most memorable days in the history of man, and their remembrance remains the most precious possession of the human heart . . . About 700,000 days have passed since the first Christmas . . . but not one on which somebody would not have died for Him . . . This is the ultimate power in the world . . . Hunted from the cradle to the grave, stoned and tempted, rejected by His people, betrayed by His disciples, scourged and mocked and spat upon and crucified, He stands today before the world as its last Hope, its only Savior, and its everlasting King . . . The 100 days of His visible life came and went quickly, but the endless days of His invisible life give meaning and hope to time and eternity . . . This is the power of Christmas . . .

In this spirit I commend you to the mercy of God — for a blessed and happy Christmas —

Sincerely yours,

O. P. Kretzmann, President