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## The Vanguard (Vol. 4, No. 3), Mar 1957

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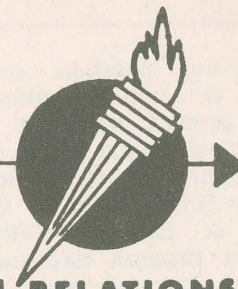
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# THE VANGUARD



... THE CHURCH IN HUMAN RELATIONS

Volume 4, Number 3

March, 1957

## THAT THE CHURCH MAY LEAD

### When Calling Negro Pastors

The time is fast coming when a congregation of Caucasian constituency will accept a pastor of another racial group. There is no noticeable trend in that direction, but there are at this time isolated examples to which one can point. There is, however, a definite trend in the direction of a similar pattern—at least north of Mason and Dixon's Line—in sports, in education, in labor, and in industry.

The church is still one of the slowest institutions to change its ways in this area. It has followed secular society rather than leading it in establishing a pattern of integration. If the matter of the calling of a minister without regard for the racial identity of the man follows the same pattern, it may be assumed that the day is not too far in the future when congregations of Caucasian constituency will call pastors without regard for hair texture, eye slant, or skin pigmentation.

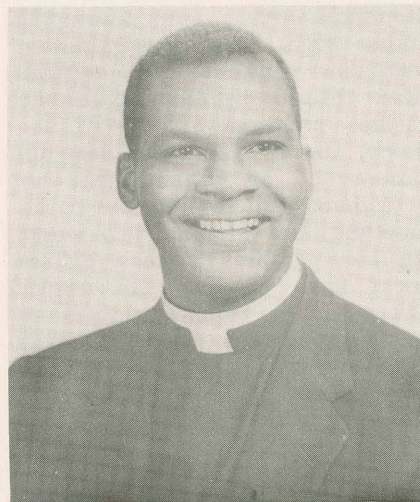
Our readers will be interested in what a Negro student of theology has to say on a closely related subject. Within a few months he will finish his theological training. During his vicarage of one and a half years in an integrated congregation, he not only won many Negroes of the community for Baptism and confirmation, but he also won the hearts of older members of the congregation, some of whom still feel more at home in a German service. His name is Samuel Hoard. This is what he wrote to **The VANGUARD**:

"As I see it, it's like this. Some people feel that, when a group of Negro Christians expresses a de-

sire for a Negro pastor to be called to serve them, it's all right, it's a natural thing. They fail to see anything unchristian in such an attitude. Be it designated as racial pride or whatever else, as I see it, such a choice is based on sinful race prejudice and on having respect of persons and should be dealt with as such. (The same would be true in the case of a congregation that would make the fact that a minister be of the Caucasian race the determining factor in calling him as a pastor.) When a man is being considered to be called, his race might be mentioned as an incidental factor only, because race is of no more importance than the fact that a man is bald-headed, red-headed, 'a little on the heavy side,' or prematurely gray.

"I refuse to be taken in by the fallacy to which some people hold that the power of the Holy Spirit is limited in its effectiveness by such mundane elements as the race or color of a man, that it can

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**SAMUEL HOARD**, student at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

## A LOOK AROUND

By Martin H. Scharlemann

### 1. Status Quo

Back in 1954 Elson Ruff could write: "The most shocking illustration of the church's conformity to its worldly situation is the insistent and almost universal segregation of Negroes within the church itself. A man's black skin, which is merely incidental, like another man's red hair, has been permitted to establish a color line across the house of God. This stigma of the Christian color line is a heavy liability of the church's claim to be the conscience of the State."

But, you know, this is rapidly changing; and the old saw is turning out to be incorrect: "Come weal or come woe, my status is quo." The status quo is changing, and for the better, especially also in our own congregations. District mission boards and even individual congregations are going to work to implement the principles set forth in St. Paul in the matter of eliminating discrimination and segregation. It still takes a "heap of doin'"; but it's being done.

### 2. A Haunting Question

Yet there remains a question, which has haunted me personally ever since a student during Religious Emphasis Week at Kansas University asked: "But where were the churches before this?" About all one can say on this point, I imagine, is to suggest that despite the hesitancy of various churches, the very presence of the church in our society was a source of leavening the whole lump. Let us suppose that there had been no churches at all in America, would there really have been a ferment in society that kept nagging individual consciences also in the area of social justice? That is a

theoretical question, of course; but it is worth reflecting on.

At present we must say that heroic efforts are being put forth, particularly by clergymen, to get a few things right in the whole field of human relations. Dr. Roland Bainton happened to be one of the men with whom we shared the program of REW at Kansas University. This whole question of the church and segregation came up—as it invariably does!—in an open forum. He was able to point out that he had just been on two extensive trips through Virginia and Arkansas and personally witnessed some of the courageous efforts on the part of the clergy to erase the color line not only in the church but also in the community.

The State of Kansas, we discovered, has carried on an integrated program in public high school education for the last twenty-five years. Its creation as a free State, of course, lent the weight of historic origins to the solution of the problem.

### 3. Workshop

Concordia Seminary will conduct a workshop for pastors this summer in the field of human relations. May I express the personal hope that at least twenty pastors will attend these four days of the sessions. We want to see this whole program in its total theological dimensions as well as in its social implications. It will be essential to consider the whole question of the nature of the Church before we can see every facet of these relations. Won't you, therefore, as a pastor set aside the dates from June 24-28 for a refreshing experience? We shall even provide a hot cup of coffee each morning.

## Though Deaf, They Speak

By Walter Heyne

Holy Cross Lutheran Church for the Deaf, St. Louis, Mo., may now be added to the growing list of churches which have given a positive answer to the question: Is it practical to unite Negroes and Caucasians in one congregation?

When work was begun among the Negro deaf of St. Louis some years back, the common pattern of segregation was followed. The Rev. Francis G. Gyle, however, soon brought the two groups together



THE REV. WM. F. REINKING (center) surrounded by officers of his integrated deaf congregation.

for special occasions and sponsored various joint activities. When the Rev. Wm. F. Reinking took over about five years ago, he continued and intensified the inter-group fellowship program and brought up the matter of an eventual amalgamation for open and frank discussion. These discussions revealed that there existed a good feeling of fellowship due to the contacts which had been cultivated. During this time, neither group had a meeting place large enough to accommodate the joint congregation for Sunday services.

In 1955, Holy Cross Church—the Caucasian group—began holding its services in the hall of St. Stephen's Church. Here there was ample room, and amalgamation was now considered in earnest. After several meetings to discuss various practical aspects of the union, the merger took place on January 1, 1956. At first there was a tendency for the Negroes to sit together; but after a few weeks the consciousness of color differences gave way to the deeper awareness of being members of one congregation, so that today each member sits wherever it is convenient.

That the process of integration has been a real one seems indicated by the last election of officers. Although the whites outnumber the Negroes, a very capable member of the Negro group was elected

president of the congregation, and the office of secretary was also given to a Negro. In the Ladies' Aid, likewise, officers are selected according to ability rather than race.

Pastor and members are thoroughly satisfied with the merger, and the congregation shows a fine spirit of cooperation and missionary zeal. Pastor Reinking reports that he in no way regrets his efforts to bring the two groups together. Though many of these people lack the ability to communicate with us via the spoken word, their actions speak loudly the truth that where faith in Christ and the love of God dwell in the heart, these bring about a unity in Christ which transcends any physical differences of race which may tend to keep us apart.

## Integration Techniques PREACHING CAN BE EDUCATION

The sermon, the Bible class, confirmation instruction, congregational and auxiliary meetings, the parish bulletin, as well as pastoral calls will afford opportunity for the pastor or other teachers of the church to educate for integration. The sermon is one of the most potent means of education also in this area.

Preaching should always be tactful. But tact is not an antonym of forthrightness, frankness, and

courage. With the voice of a modern prophet the pastor can, by means of the sermon, lead his people to unprecedented heights of Christian understanding, so that they will be ready and desirous to do the will of God also in the matter of integration. For such is the power of the Word and the Spirit of God working through the Word.

But to be effective, the sermon must be specific in its application. A mere reference to a much-needed love toward one's neighbor, even toward a fellow human being of another racial group, even toward persons of that description living within the boundaries of the community of the church, will not necessarily take care of the matter. Christian people, also those harboring attitudes of deep racial prejudice, may be ready to accept such preaching without giving up their prejudices. The preaching must be so specific that it attacks at its very roots the specific sin of prejudice that would keep the Christian from fully accepting into the fellowship of the church people of other racial connections.

A series of sermons on the Christian viewpoint in race relations may be in place from time to time. When preaching on certain texts which periodically form the basis for his sermon, the pastor who is conscious of the needs of his people in this area will be compelled to go out of his way not to make crystal-clear to his people what is the will of God in race relations.

The many current events involving people of other racial groups make it easy and natural for the pastor to give guidance to his people and to prepare them for the happy acceptance of a program of complete integration which means an acceptance of people into the fellowship of the church without any racial consideration. — If he will but make the application.

A certain pastor who had been preaching the Gospel for forty years wrote: "You agitate race relations, while we preach the Gospel." Yet, after forty years of that kind of "preaching the Gospel," he was not able to effect the inclusion of two Negro pastors

into the pastoral conference of his city, much less to persuade his brethren of the cloth that they should welcome people of other racial groups into the fellowship of their churches.

The Word of God properly preached searches out the sinful prejudices of the heart. The Gospel of Jesus Christ "is the power of God unto salvation," also to the acceptance of the will of God which is the sanctification of the hearers.

Other educational channels will be discussed in the next issue of **The VANGUARD**.

## THAT THE CHURCH MAY LEAD

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accomplish through one color or complexion of the species of man that which it cannot accomplish through another. (Cf. St. Paul and the races among whom he worked, St. Philip and the Ethiopian, the successes of other missionaries, the accomplishments in our own Synod of one who with his family lived in a parsonage in an otherwise fairly solid Negro community and served a church of predominantly Negro constituency for many years.)

"Catering to the whims and fancies of people who are race conscious is tantamount to following the dictates of race prejudice. This should not be a practice of the Christian church.

"Often, in Synodical circles, the expressions—or comparable ones—are heard by Negro candidates for the ministry (perhaps spoken with no malice intended and yet with

little forethought employed): 'Your people really need you,' or, 'Millions of your people are starving for the Gospel and you'll have a job on your hands.' Some may still be impressed by the fading American mores of yesteryear and quite readily agree, 'That's right!' (and with no mental reservations or afterthoughts). There has always been a struggle within me to refrain from countering: 'And millions of "your people" need the same Gospel equally as much,' or from pointing out what should be obvious, that, since Christ died once for all, I am interested in bringing this Gospel message to any and all people, especially in view of the fact that there is a greater mobility of people today, resulting in more and more changing, and oftentimes mixed, neighborhoods on the American scene. We as future clergymen, and as clergymen, ought to be concerned about just simply reaching **people** here in America. We should leave the specialization to those who are going to serve in foreign countries among people who speak a foreign language.

"I can conceive of an exception to this rule. In the case of calling a pastor to serve in a congregation that has the intention of integrating, no better method could be used to demonstrate the sincerity of its effort to integrate in the pews than by an integrated ministry.

"People may accuse me of living in a dream world, but, thank God, as I see it, it's a Christian world."

The cancer of segregation cannot be cured with the vaseline of gradualism. —Martin Luther King

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## IN THE PULPIT -- SKIN COLOR OR ---

Elmo Roper, a public opinion analyst, is reported in *The Crisis* as having made a scientific study of the annual dollar costs of racial discrimination to American business and industry. According to that magazine, he came up with a figure of thirty billion dollars. His estimate, says *The Crisis*, is conservative, based on twelve years of observation by the firm Elmo Roper Associates.

On the other hand, think of the benefit that came to the concert stage through Marian Anderson, to sports through Jackie Robinson, to the nation and the world through Ralph Bunche. Then think of the blessing that can come to the church when the church in general, in calling a pastor, will not look to the color of his skin but to his ability, faith, and courageous leadership—a man like Martin Luther King of Montgomery.

When black people, or those not so black, and white people, or those not altogether white, will look at the preacher for what he really is, not for his color which, at the most, is only skin deep, the Head of the church, our Savior

In His divine providence the Head of the church, our Savior Jesus Christ, may then give to the church, up from the cotton fields of Alabama or out of the crowded streets of Harlem, another Martin Luther of the 1483 variety, a boon to the church and a blessing to the nations.

"I dream of a day when there will be better understanding among people. When I sing, I don't

want them to see that my face is black; I don't want them to see that my face is white—I want them to see my soul. And that is colorless."—Marian Anderson (Quoted from *The Christian Parent*, February 1957.)

## "Showdown" on Segregation Predicted

The following news item was released by the News Bureau of the National Lutheran Council on January 31st: "A veteran church observer of the political scene predicted today that 1957 will bring a 'heightening' of racial tension and a 'showdown' between federal and state authorities over the issue of segregation in the public schools. 'This year may prove to be the high water mark in bitterness and violence on the one hand and the establishment of the supremacy of federal authority over state control on the other,' declared Dr. Robert E. Van Deusen, secretary of the Washington, D.C., office of the Division of Public Relations of the National Lutheran Council.

"He told the NLC's 39th annual meeting that 'as disregard for law and order breaks out in more and more places, the need for effective federal intervention at crucial points will become apparent.' At the same time, he added, 'running battles in the courts will provide a series of showdowns between federal judicial rulings and the state systems of school administration.'

"'By painful degrees, it will be established that the United States is a nation rather than a federation of autonomous states,' he said. Dr. Van Deusen also forecast that



The Rev. Simon Peter Montgomery, Pastor of Old Mystic Methodist Church (left), was elected chaplain of the State House of Representatives (Conn.) He is the first Negro clergyman to hold that post. Shown with him is the Rev. Harold G. S. King, out-going chaplain. Mr. Montgomery is one of two Negro ministers in Connecticut with an all-white congregation. —(Religious News Service Photo)

the year will bring 'belated progress' toward racial integration in church life."

In a letter to *The VANGUARD*, Professor Karl Keller of Portland, Oregon, writes: "I want to acknowledge receipt of the annual reports of the Lutheran Human Relations Association (Proceedings of the 1956 Valparaiso University Institute on Human Relations) which arrived the other day. Please accept my congratulations for another excellent job. The essays printed there certainly deserve the widest dissemination and the most thoughtful reading within our Church. We shall do everything in our power to distribute them here in the Portland area."

### LUTHERAN HUMAN RELATIONS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana

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