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THE VANGUARD

... THE CHURCH IN HUMAN RELATIONS

Volume 4, Number 9

October, 1957

THAT THE CHURCH MAY LEAD

In the Southern District

Though the sole purpose of **The VANGUARD** is to discuss race relations from the Christian viewpoint, its writers think more in terms of race relations in the North than in the South. Perhaps this is due in part to the fact that almost all articles appearing in this publication are written by men from the North. Another reason is that they realize the present-day race problem is not a provincial one, not even peculiar to the United States; it is a world issue. An honest and objective study of what has been published in this paper will reveal that examples of race relations, good or bad, that have been cited are not primarily from south of Mason and Dixon's line. **The VANGUARD** writers are watching very closely what is happening north of that line because they know that the battle against ungodly racism will, in the future, no doubt have to be fought primarily in the North (and West), in the great metropolitan centers of these areas and where our large, well-established down-town churches are. What happens in the South is, according to **The VANGUARD's** approach, a part of the pattern as a whole, but only a part of it. It is in this framework of thought that the present article too is being published.

With this little introduction out of the way, we shall proceed to discuss things good and things bad in an area of the church, especially of The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod, where church people,



Members of the Board of Directors and of the Advisory Board of the Lutheran Human Relations Association of America, at the Eighth Annual Valparaiso University Institute on Human Relations, July 26-28, 1957.

Seated, left to right: John Strietelmeier, Professor of Geography and Geology at Valparaiso University, Managing Editor of **THE CRESSET**, newly elected member of the Board of Directors; Ernest Williams, St. Louis, Mo., re-elected treasurer of LHRAA; The Rev. Walter Heyne, pastor-elect of Berea Lutheran Church, Detroit, re-elected president of LHRAA; The Rev. Clemonce Sabourin, pastor of Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, New York City, newly elected secretary.

Standing, left to right: Dr. Thomas Coates, Professor of Religion, Concordia Senior College, Fort Wayne, Ind., member of Advisory Board, essayist at the Institute; The Rev. Leslie F. Frerking, pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church, Charlotte, N. C., Institute preacher; Dr. Andrew Schulze, Executive Secretary of LHRAA; The Rev. Martin E. Nees, pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, Kansas City, Kans., retiring secretary; The Rev. Karl E. Lutze, pastor of The Lutheran Church of the Prince of Pease, Tulsa, Okla., retiring vice-president.

Other members of LHRAA Boards who were in attendance at the Institute either full-time or part-time, not on the picture, are: The Rev. M. N. Carter, D.D., The Rev. M. S. Dickinson, Dr. O. P. Kretzmann, and the Hon. Paul Simon.

like their neighbors, may be wont to frown down upon and to shove us away by calling us "meddlers" or agitators" or -- ... But with a prayer upon our lips and in our hearts, and with our eyes at the same time turned to other locales

where similar difficulties may already be present or threatening to come, we shall speak of the status quo in that area of the South known to many of us as the Southern District of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

Bit of History

Let us first describe briefly the relation or fellowship that has until recently been in evidence between the so-called white churches of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the so-called Negro churches of the same faith and confession. This fellowship can be described in a sentence: it has been non-existent. We are now referring to that honest-to-goodness fellowship which people can see, evidenced in worshipping together and in working together in the cause of the Kingdom of our Savior.

The Synodical Conference, of which The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is the largest constituent body, has carried on what has been called "Negro mission work" in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana since 1877. Some of the churches resulting from this mission work are now more than seventy years old. This mission work has until recently been carried on independent of the Southern District excepting insofar as that District is a part of the Missouri Synod.

Since all other districts have now taken over the so-called "Negro work" in their districts, the Board of Directors of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, following the directive given it by the Lutheran Synodical Conference in 1946, has asked the Southern District too to accept the supervision and control of the "Negro mission work" in their area. That is all that is before the Southern District at this time. Not the full sweep of Christian fellowship with all that it entails both within the church and in the community in which the church works; only the supervision of "Negro mission work" which means for the most part keeping a careful watch over the dollars supplied by Christians from other parts of the country.

In itself this a good recommendation; it is good from both a functional as well as an ideological point of view. To get down to the roots, one must first scratch the surface, and this is surface-scratching -- a rather bold thing to do when one is afraid to get at the roots. But more must be done.

The Completed Picture

There is more to Christian unity and Christian understanding. And the Missouri Synod has acknowledged this. If the Synod's resolution is worth more than the paper on which it is printed, it applies to the Southern District of that body. This is what the Missouri Synod resolved in 1956:

"That all congregations of Synod regard all persons regardless of race or ethnic origin living within the limits of their respective parishes, and not associated with another Christian church, as individuals whom God would reach with the Gospel of His saving grace through the ministry of the local congregation;

"That since Christians are constrained to do justice and love mercy, we acknowledge our responsibility as a church to provide guidance for our members to work in the capacity of Christian citizens for the elimination of discrimination, wherever it may exist, in community, city, state, nation, and world."

After the Southern District has "scratched the surface" by taking over the supervision of "Negro mission work" within its geographic confines, what else in Christian race relations must be expected of them -- to meet the requirements not only of synodical resolutions, but also of the Holy Scriptures -- in the way of human justice and Christian love toward all people in their midst?

1. Confess their sins of omission and commission of past decades; and repent of these sins.

2. Acknowledge those won for Christ as worthy, through faith, of being incorporated into the body of Christ which is the Church; and give evidence of the sincerity of such acknowledgement by accepting those won for Christ into visible fellowship in worship before the altar of the Lord and by inviting them to work together with all those who have been won, so that they may participate in all privileges and responsibilities of the organized church.

3. Let the prophetic voice be heard in the pulpit and the class-

room. Let pastors and laymen speak out against the violations of human justice and Christian love. Let them as advocates of justice denounce the withholding of the ballot from those for whom it is intended. Let them make it clear that as Christian citizens of a democracy they acknowledge the rights of all, as individuals, to enjoy every privilege of the schools made possible by their own taxes, and that the full protection of the courts and of the police power is the common right of all citizens of these United States. Such Christian witness is imperative in these times.

When writing the foregoing, we were fully conscious of the fact that some officials, many pastors, and some laymen of the District involved are in full agreement with what has been written. They have in more than one way given evidence of their agreement. They are to be encouraged. They are to be reminded that, come hell or high water, it is better to stand for the right, to the praise of the name of Christ, than to live under the smothering calm of a pseudo peace.

Dr. Martin H. Scharlemann, Professor of New Testament at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, is scheduled to present the doctrinal essay at the convention of the Southern District to be held Oct. 28 - Nov. 3. The topic assigned him and to which we are sure he will do full justice is: "The Church in Her Struggle for Unity."

In view of the historic nature of that convention, the pertinency of the essay to be read, the weal or woe of the whole Church involved in both the discussions and the decisions of that convention, we invoke upon Dr. Scharlemann, the essayist, Pastor Paul W. Streufert, the President of the District, and all its pastors and delegates the blessing of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, praying that our brethren of the Southern District may be endowed with the Spirit of God fearlessly to face the facts as they are, and courageously to fit the action to the word, to the glory of the God in Whose Name we ask it.

A LOOK AROUND

By Martin H. Scharlemann

1. South Africa Again

Most churches in South Africa are standing up against a new law that subjects attendance by natives at worship services outside their "locations" to the permission in each instance of the Ministry for Native Affairs. The Christian Council of South Africa has denounced such a law and has stigmatized compulsory segregation "in any sphere of life" as "denial of the law of God and repudiation of the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ."

There is a moral in all this. For the passing of this law is evidence for the fact that one can not compromise even a little on this matter of integration. A great many Christians in South Africa at first felt that yielding a little might satisfy the insistence of an obviously "white supremacy" government. Now they have discovered that only complete surrender of religious freedom is the price of peace -- the peace of the graveyard!

2 Arkansas

In the meantime all eyes in America are turned to Little Rock, Arkansas, where a "white supremacy" state administration has challenged the authority of the Federal Government. In a real way the headlong action of Gov. Faubus is going to contribute to an increase in civil rights. Calling out the National Guard of Arkansas to keep a handful of Negro students from exercising their rights as citizens has demonstrated the hollowness of the oft-repeated claim of the strong Southerner, "We take good care of our Negroes." It is now clear to all who can see that the champions of white supremacy are determined to preserve a way of life in which the Negro shall not have some of the basic rights of full citizenship.

3. Chicago, Cleveland, Toledo, etc.

A few weeks ago we happened across a map showing what would happen to some of our Midwest ports along the Great Lakes once the St. Lawrence Waterway is completed, two years from now. The caption read, "The Midwest Empire." As one contemplates the

consequences of having the large freighters and liners that now traverse the oceans call at Chicago, Cleveland, Toledo, etc., one begins to wonder whether our church has any plans to meet the momentous social changes that will overtake these inland cities. The influx of people has already begun. Negroes are leaving the South by the hundreds and moving into these cities.

We would venture a guess that the Roman Church already owns strategic properties in the areas that will be settled by these millions of people, and that this church is prepared to take advantage of the coming expansion in such a way as to make Lutherans an even greater minority in those areas than they are now.

In this connection a person is tempted to suggest that possibly our organization, with its strong emphasis on the congregation, is not equal to the task of confronting great social changes in such a way as to take advantage of them for the expansion of the church. It has been estimated, for example, that in thirty years the Lutheran Church will be extinct in the city of St. Louis proper. This is partly due to the fact that in our present system there is really no central authority for an area. Possibly, therefore, Dr. Walther had something with his "Grossgemeinde." That arrangement at least left no doubt as to the person who had over-all responsibility for this metropolitan area.

WHICH REMINDS ME

Dr. Scharlemann's article "South Africa Again" calls to mind a book that we should like to recommend

to our readers. The title is "Naught for Your Comfort." It was written by an Anglican priest, Trevor Huddleston (Doubleday, \$3.75). It is conceivable that some of our readers have not had occasion to read up on the development of the South African type of racial segregation called *apartheid* and that they will welcome some comments that we should like to make on this book which treats that subject. But whether you have read nothing or much on the subject, in our opinion you will not make a mistake in reading "Naught for Your Comfort." It is a most thrilling account of Father Huddleston's experience in living for twelve years as a minister of Christ among the Bantus of Sophiatown, a neglected "location" of Johannesburg, and of the strange development of one *apartheid* law after another by the "Christian" government of South Africa. These laws are intended to restrict more and more the rights of all South Africans excepting the two million whites of European ancestry.

The thoughtful reader will be impressed with the parallel he finds in the description of South African *apartheid* and segregation in the United States, a parallel not only in the type of segregation but in the rationalizations of those that advocate it, and in the deadening apathy of many Christian citizens who condone segregation by their silence. If nothing else, this parallel will make the reading of the book a helpful and rewarding experience.

But what makes the book most unique is its theological orientation or its Christian analysis of *apartheid*. The basis for Father Huddle-

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ston's argument against **apartheid** is the doctrine of the incarnation, the coming into human flesh, of the Son of God. **Apartheid**, the author points out, is directed against Christ who shares our common humanity, also that of the lowliest Bantu of South Africa.

"Force" Once Again

On several occasions **The VANGUARD** has spoken on "the use of force" in promoting better race relations. The events of the past week and months, especially what has happened in Arkansas recently, make a few further comments on "the use of force" relevant, it would seem.

To be specific, Governor Faubus of Arkansas decided to use **force**, as he claims, to prevent violence in Little Rock. The power of the sword is his as the chief executive of Arkansas. If it could be proved that there was danger of violence in that city and that the Governor had the good intention of maintaining law and order by calling out the state militia, the Federal Court and Judge Davies as well as Attorney General Brownell and the President of the United States would no doubt have found no fault at all with the Governor's action; if they had done anything at all, they would have commended him for the faithful and conscientious performance of duty on his part. But the superficial reader and observer may overlook the fact that the obvious duty of the militia as assigned them by Governor Faubus was not merely to avert violence but to defy the authority of the United States of America by opposing with the

force of arms the integration of Negro students required by law and ordered by the Federal Court. On whatever side of the controversy he may find himself, the Christian is compelled by the Word of God and the dictates of justice to condemn such use of **force**.

The use of **force** by Governor Faubus, however, is but a symbol -- if not in kind then in purpose -- of the **force** that has been used, lo, these many years under the rule of segregation. One cannot be mistaken in this matter if one looks about. Who is it that has come to defence of the indefensible deed of Governor Faubus? Those who impose segregation! **Force**, unlawful and ungodly, is and has been used by the advocates of segregation, a system intended to **force** Negroes into or to remain in a second-class citizenship status, to the unholy exaltation of a theory of "white supremacy." In one form or another **force** has been used since the days of Reconstruction by the Ku Klux Klan, by filibustering Thurmonds, by many states-righters, and by the "respectable" White Citizen's Councils. Kicked down into the dust by such **force**, millions of our citizens have patiently endured the woes, frustrations, heartaches, and untimely death that resulted.

When one hears the cry of the good and cautious, "Be patient; don't use **force**; you'll do more harm than good," their warning must be interpreted in the light of what has been going on all the time. "Be patient!" How long?

If a lawfully constituted Federal Government has no power to protect its citizenry -- and nine mil-

lion Negro citizens are involved -- of what value is the Government? And if the Federal Government has the power and consistently refuses to use it, who in the end can respect the Government?

No one ever knows absolutely what the outcome of the use of **force** will be. But if the Government doesn't use its power to "punish the evil doer" and to protect all citizens and their rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," we know that the other, illegal and diabolical, **force** of the segregationist will run rampant and in ever bolder defiance of the law and the promptings of human justice. When the Government has exercised all due patience and tact, and the users of illegal force will neither relent nor reason, the duty of the Government is unmistakable. If the President of the United States had taken no step to counter the rebellion of Governor Faubus, the President would thereby have declared the Federal Government impotent and in the final analysis non-existent.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch quoted the Rev. Jahn, a Lutheran pastor of Little Rock, as having said "the crisis caused by the blocking of integration of schools in Little Rock has offended the majority of persons there and made them feel ashamed." The Rev. Krause, a Lutheran pastor of Fort Smith, Ark., was quoted by the same paper as having "called on all people of Arkansas to support integration regardless of their personal feelings, for the sake of uniformity in the United States and Christian principles."

LUTHERAN HUMAN RELATIONS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana

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