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O.P. Kretzmann

Valparaiso University

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Dear Brother:

During the academic year 1953-54 I hope to write these random paragraphs more regularly than in the immediate past. There are several reasons for this somewhat vague hope. In the first place, I should like to submit some of the things that are being said and thought and done on the campus; in the second place, the University is again on the eve of several major developments — both academic and physical — concerning which I should like to keep you informed as thoroughly as possible. I shall be grateful if you find these notes of some small interest.

I hope that you have had a happy and peaceful vacation. Sometimes I suspect that there is an unborn doctoral dissertation in the topic, "The Purposes of a Clerical Vacation and how these Purposes may be Accomplished." The reason for this suspicion lies in the fact that the brethren seem to differ widely and articulately on the objectives of a ministerial recess. A few months ago a brother stopped at the office and told me that he has regularly taken his vacation among as many people as he can possibly find in one place. He goes to the most crowded resort and happily browses around among human beings. When I asked him to give cause and reason, he answered; "When I come back home my own people look so much better." A second brother (and I believe that he probably represents the majority) stated that he tries to get away from people just as far as possible. He pointed out that the ministry is about 75% contact with human beings and that this continuous touching of souls and hearts is spiritually and emotionally tremendously exhausting. For a complete rest he felt, it was necessary to get away from human beings just as much and as far as one possibly can.

An interesting question — and certainly not academic! A clerical vacation must be one which considers the spiritual and emotional factors in the greatest profession on earth. It is evident that, with a few exceptions, the ministry does not make heavy demands upon a man's physical strength if his health is fairly normal. Day after day and year after year, however, it imposes a spiritual and mental strain which must be the primary factor in the choice and value of a vacation. This is why our Lord said: "Come ye apart and rest awhile." The "moving apart" from the pressing, restless crowd was a necessary prelude to the "resting". Who of us does not know that in our age of crowds and cities and telephones?

I spent a part of the waiting, breathless summer of the year of our Lord 1953 on a hurried journey to Europe. Since my return I have tried very hard not to pose as an expert, as so many returning travelers do, on all matters relating to that dark and sullen continent. Europe is far too complex and decadent for even the most thorough observer to make any relevant generalizations. Perhaps, however, two observations may be in order in this brief note.

First: We flew out of Washington on a military plane at 1:00 p.m. We were at the Azores at 9:30 p.m., and in Paris by 9:00 a.m. It must be perfectly clear to everyone that in a world so small some of the slogans and watchwords of 1776 and 1920 are completely irrelevant and silly. What happens now almost anywhere on the face of the globe resounds around the world in a few seconds. It is true, of course, that this also applies to the eternal gospel and the journeys of missionaries. Through the speed of light and the roar of the airplane we are coming to understand better what God the Holy Spirit meant two thousand years ago when He wrote through the pen of St. Paul: "God hath made of one flesh . . . .".

Second: One afternoon I had a most pleasant and illuminating conference with the current rector of the University of Heidelberg, Dr. Eberhardt Schmidt. After we had discussed the possibility of exchange students and professors (a project in which he was very much interested) we turned to other matters. I shall never forget the emphatic way in which he pointed to the fact that the Ruprecht-Karl University at Heidelberg had been founded in 1386. Then he added: "You in America must know that the world has changed more since 1914 than in all the years between 1386 and 1914." The full weight of this observation is still not as evident as it should be. Years ago when I came from the streets of New York to my grandfather's parish in Perry County I first felt the tremendous gap which separated the world before the industrial revolution from our present era. I have often noted that there was less difference between the life of my grandfather and the life of the Galilean shepherd than there is between his life in 1900 and my own in 1953.
Foot-note: Perhaps I should add that the most instructive person I met on the entire journey was the sixty-five year old Frau Wirtin at the Wirtschaft zum Roten Schiff in Neckargemünd near Heidelberg. A half hour conversation with her was almost equal to a graduate course in European history and economics. She had lost her husband in World War I and her son in World War II. In her eyes were unshed tears, a little wisdom and much despair. From these people, the little people, we must learn if we are to speak with power and understanding to our generation.

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At the present moment our enrollment for the academic year 1953 - 1954 seems to be approximately 1750. While this is still the highest in the Lutheran Church in America, I nevertheless feel that we should level off at a somewhat higher figure than that. In fact I am quite certain that within the next few years we shall have to make room on our campus for more than two thousand students.

It may be interesting to note that the largest increases have been in our College of Engineering, the courses in Elementary Education, and in Social Work. I believe that one of the most interesting reflections of the social and cultural development of our constituency lies in the fact that so many of our girls are entering elementary education and social work. Both are highly respected professions in which the Christian attitude and faith are desperately needed. I am certain that they will make a significant contribution to the world of tomorrow.

Foot Notes: I like a recent column in The Christian Century by Simeon Stylites under the heading: "Calamity by Flood." Simeon reports that the little town of Meadowbrook in the Dakotas (probably fictional) was hard hit by floods. All wires were down and railroad tracks were washed away. The entire region was without communication with the outside world for several days. Simeon then points out that this put Grace Church in Meadowbrook completely out of touch with the general headquarters of its denomination. "The congregation was entirely without direction from above as to what special days had been designated for the next two Sundays. That meant nothing less than 'they were on their own' — a situation without precedent for the past few years. What could they do? No new enlistment day, no uncles and nephews day, no day at all — just a blank Sunday!" The congregation finally decided to devote a Sunday to the worship of God, and, Simeon reports, everyone was very happy about it . . . . . . " I like Reinhold Niebuhr's description of the notorious 'Red Dean of Canterbury.' Professor Niebuhr does not believe that the Dean has any ideological ties with Marxism but "he has a soft heart, a softer head, and an invincible vanity which only big crowds can satisfy." A wonderful description!

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When I returned from Europe I was very happy to see the resolution adopted by the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod in convention assembled at Houston, Texas, concerning the possibility of introducing a two year teacher training program on our campus for women who intend to teach in our parochial schools. All of us have seen the great need for this type of work in our schools. I am sure that we shall do everything in our power to make such an arrangement possible. Personally I feel that we can work out a program which will safeguard the interests of Synod and enable us to equip good feminine teachers for our schools.

* * *

A remarkable article in the July issue of The Atlantic Monthly by N. J. Berrill, entitled "Detectives of Time," attempts to point out that the intelligent use of radio carbon and our knowledge of its rate of disintegration has now enabled scientists to time certain events in the past quite accurately. Of course, the entire procedure is based on the assumption that the radio carbon atom disintegrates at a constant rate. If that is true, this new way of telling time holds some fascinating possibilities. That, however, is not the main point of this footnote. When I came to the end of the article I paused for a moment over the following sentences: "In 5000 B.C. the sea was fifty feet lower than it is now, in 1000 B.C. it was twenty-five feet lower than now. In the last twenty years it has risen by nearly one-half a foot — a pace that seems to bring the end in sight." . . . . . . "In spite of the milder trend of the last few decades the climate of the temperate earth has become comparatively cool and moist during the last two thousand years." . . . . "We may be two or three thousand years past the middle of a short interglacial period, and a further fall in average temperature of about 4.5 degrees Fahrenheit is all that is needed to bring the end. We seem to be caught between too much sea and too much ice. Atomic clocks may show which will be our fate." . . . . . . What a faith for times like these! What an incentive to live in mercy and in hope! When God — and His creative power — are left out of the study of the atom, the glacier or the sea there is nothing left but darkness and the vast emptiness of a blind, irrational Universe.

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At this time of the year some brethren always write in asking about our prospects in intercollegiate athletics. As is well known, this is one of the most difficult areas in the academic world to ferret out the
truth. Coaches, athletic directors, and trainers are traditionally gloomy and pessimistic. The usual story is: "I doubt if we will have eleven men on the field who can walk." It is true, of course, that the abolition of the platoon system in football makes the prospects of the small school somewhat uncertain. But and large it should work in favor of those of us who have smaller squads. But coaches apparently are sharply divided on the question.

I am very proud of our coaching staff these days. Solidly Lutheran, they represent a splendid attitude over against some of the evils which have come over collegiate athletics. Of course, they share some of the weaknesses and foibles of all coaches. Our splendid football coach for example, Mr. Emory G. Bauer, is always a nervous wreck at the end of every game. He dies a thousand deaths when something goes wrong on the field. Last year I was sitting on the bench beside the University doctor, watching him chew grass and jump up and down in nervous excitement during a tense moment in the game. The doctor turned to me, and pointing to him, said: "If I could cross him with a cadaver I would have a normal human being." Occasionally I have seen a brother who has the same intensely nervous approach to his official life.

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Every now and then a good brother asks why we do not appoint this Lutheran or that one to a teaching position. Perhaps I should say in the first place that I am always grateful for any recommendations of men and women who have the proper academic and spiritual qualifications. On the other hand, I think we should also state very frankly that to carry the label "Lutheran" is not the sole qualification for a teaching position either at Valparaiso University or at any other Lutheran institution. It is a curious fact that there are still some Lutherans left for whom a Ph.D. is like wine. It goes to their head and distorts their sense of value completely. Often, all too often, "their church does not appreciate their brilliant scholarship, their potential leadership, and the wonderful contribution they could make if they would receive at least twice as much salary as most of the preachers in the Missouri Synod." All because of a Ph.D. Many of our fellow-Lutherans carry the burden of this degree with dignity and grace, but there are still some for whom it is a snare and a delusion.

It should also be noted that all our educational work on the elementary and secondary levels does not necessarily preclude an almost complete secularization of the mind in college and graduate school. I remember with something like despair an interview which I conducted a few years ago with one of our Lutheran boys who had received a doctorate in sociology. When I cautiously inquired about the relationship of his religion and his theology to his work in sociology he definitely and boldly answered that there was absolutely no connection. When I asked him whether there would be any difference in his teaching of sociology on our campus from what it might be at the University of X, he replied that there would be no difference at all. Sadly I let him wander out into the swamp of modernity. Twenty years hence, please God, he will know that all good theology is immediately relevant to all good knowledge.

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There can be no doubt that the University is once more on the threshold of an era of development and progress. The building of an institution, like the building of a parish, does not proceed in a straight, upward line. It is rather more like a stairway in which periods of consolidation alternate with periods of rapid growth and progress. We have now finished such a period of comparative quiet and must now move forward into the late fifties and early sixties when the great flood of college students will descend upon all American campuses. In terms of our development here at our Lutheran University it means the immediate building of a Student Union, the erection of several dormitories, and (I hope) the building of our new chapel. During the next six months we hope to devote considerable attention to the financial problems involved in these operations. Any suggestions or recommendations from our brethren will be deeply appreciated.

Our cordial good wishes for much joy and success in your work for the Kingdom —

Fraternally yours,

[Signature]

O. P. Kretzmann

President