

11-1950

November-December 1950

O.P. Kretzmann
Valparaiso University

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

Recommended Citation

Kretzmann, O.P., "November-December 1950" (1950). *Campus Commentary*. 31.
https://scholar.valpo.edu/campus_commentary/31

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.

Campus Commentary

VOLUME 1

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER, 1950

No. 3

Dear Brother:

This will probably reach you shortly before the Christmas services begin. There is a high and solemn privilege about preaching on the mystery and mercy of the Incarnation which, I am sure, our pastors feel more deeply than anyone else in the world. On Christmas Eve I like to spend a few moments in visualizing the churches I have seen these twenty-five years — the lighted candles, the hurrying people, the happy greetings — and above all the sermon from our Lutheran pulpits, unique in the modern world, setting forth without sentimentality and without doubt the fact of the coming of the Son of God for our redemption. May our infant Savior be with you at that hour!

— — — — —

To the other side of history . . . As I write this, the news from Korea is the most depressing since the dark days of 1942 and 1943. I wonder how often you feel, like Elijah or Isaiah, that your work and words are in vain and that the world, so far now from the manger, is dancing madly to its destruction . . . that men have forgotten there is a God . . . that the evening of storm and disaster is now upon us. I believe that I have mentioned elsewhere that a surprising number of the brethren occasionally write something this way about their renewed interest in eschatology. They seem to feel that there is an element of finality in the work of our generation of preachers which should serve as an undertone in everything we do. They are aware of the fact, of course, that eschatology is one of the most difficult areas of theology to handle well. It must be a good eschatology, Scriptural and Lutheran, or else it can easily become an excuse for quietism and an irrational retreat from life. And yet there is now a greater place for it in our preaching . . . the signs multiply . . . the earth begins to shake . . . and the hearts of men tremble with fear . . .

— — — — —

A month or two ago I wrote something about the effect of world events on the younger generation. That is now becoming much more noticeable. Many of them say very little about it but it is a shadow, deep and dark, over their minds. Those of us who lived through 1940 and 1941 now have a strange sense of recapitulation. Surely the hour demands preachers who live close to God so that they can speak to these anxious — and often bewildered and rebellious — hearts with comfort and power.

— — — — —

In this connection . . . An urgent plea for help . . . You can readily imagine what it will mean to us at the University when our boys begin to leave in ever increasing numbers. If we are to keep our facilities for service to the Church, now set up for 2,000 students, at the greatest possible economy, we shall have to have many replacements. I know that this is the worst possible season of the year to ask this of you. But would it be possible for you to make a note somewhere to send us the names of your high school seniors as soon as possible? Perhaps you can turn this task over to one of your young people. We need those names to get started on our problem. It will be the greatest help you can possibly give us at this moment. As soon as we receive the names of these seniors we shall get in touch with them and try to persuade them to attend our Lutheran University.

— — — — —

Another matter . . . Once more I would like to commend to your attention our annual collection for Valpo on the last Sunday in January. This, too, will be more important to us than ever before. I understand that these notes will be accompanied by a fine letter from President Behnken in which he endorses our appeal to our congregations. I hope that you will be able to present it to all your members. President Behnken and our synodical advisory committee are aware of the fact that if we can raise sufficient funds for our current operations (\$600,000.00 this year) through our annual congregational

offerings, confined to a single Sunday of the church year, we shall not have to expose ourselves to the recurring complaint of the brethren that the constant appeals from many good causes are disturbing our congregational life. A generous collection on Valpo Sunday will be a real and great help.

Now an altogether different matter . . . A few nights ago our faculty committee on athletics accepted an invitation to have our football team appear in the Cigar Bowl at Tampa, Florida on New Year's Day. Previously we had declined two other invitations because we felt that they were not in keeping with the dignity and purposes of the school. Some of these Bowl affairs are dubious ventures, both morally and financially. The Cigar Bowl, however, is sponsored by responsible civic groups in Tampa and seems to be good in every way. Besides, the game on New Year's Day does not interfere in any way with the academic and church life of our boys. If you should plan to be anywhere in the neighborhood of Tampa on New Year's Day (a forlorn hope for most of us) please drop me a line and I shall ask Prof. Henrichs to get you some seats as close to the fifty-yard line as possible. Our boys will need some stentorian preachers' voices to cheer them on.

These notes are really meandering this time. Sometime I would like to say more about our new parochial school on the edge of our campus. In a few short months it has become a tremendous asset to our common life. In addition to its obvious advantages, there is the long term benefit of having our students, who will scatter into every corner of the Church, constantly aware of the need for such schools. They see it almost every day and they must carry away from the campus a definite impression of the integral importance of a parochial school in the life of the Church of Tomorrow. By the way, there are, of course, good parochial schools and bad parochial schools, as in every other area of the work of the Church. The bad ones, I have observed, are amazingly small in number. The good ones have an effect on the young idea which is beyond measuring. I have a six-year-old trudging off every morning, and the effect on his total outlook and attitudes is already a source of daily wonder. The Word of God in the hands of a skillful teacher is still a marvelous and effective power. I must confess that I had almost forgotten how powerful it can really be when it comes, pure and strong, to the heart and mind of a child.

A younger brother writes a long epistle in which he asks plaintively: "How in all the world am I going to get enough reading done to keep my reservoirs, spiritual and intellectual, filled?" That is really one of the \$64.00 questions these days. I would be glad to get some answers from brethren who have solved that problem to their own satisfaction. I hope to have some vague suggestions in another edition of these notes.

And so into 1951 . . . I really hope that it will be a blessed one for you. It can be happy, too — not in the way the world measures happiness but in the sure happiness of what can come, especially by the fruitful preaching of the Word. A few weeks ago some of us were present as Brother Moeller, the late president of our St. Paul's college at Concordia, lay dying in a quiet room at Racine, Wisconsin. As they carried him to the hospital, the last words some of us heard from him were: "My Lord Jesus will always take care of me." Simple words . . . they could have been spoken by a child . . . but in them was everything we need, high and great and eternal . . . I am sure that you will be able to say them all the uncertain days of 1951 . . .

Very cordially and sincerely yours,

O. P. Kretzmann
President