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# Campus Commentary

VOLUME 2

JULY, 1952

No. 3

Dear Brother:

Just a few random notes before you go on your 1952 vacation. In another place I have written lately about vacations for preachers. What I wrote then was directed to our laity. These few lines are for us alone. I have often wondered about the good brother who says or writes somewhat proudly: "I haven't had a vacation for twenty-three years." My wonder is rooted in the question: "Is this really something to be proud of? Or has it perhaps been bad for the brother, for his congregation, and for his pastoral conference? Has he had a chance to read, to reflect, to meditate, to look to the hills from whence cometh his help?" Perhaps! My grandfather walking and driving the roads of Perry County for 40 years saw the stars in their courses, the coming and going of the seasons, and the hand of God upon the turning earth. I remember that he carried his sermon texts on his mind, and they bounced around there almost as much as his body swayed in the old ministerial buggy. But we? You cannot meditate (or can you?) in a Pontiac on the streets of Cleveland, Detroit, or Chicago without running the immediate risk of a fatal accident. For the kind of meditation we need these hours and days we must have vacations. Even our Lord said to his weary disciples: "Come ye apart and rest a while." Therefore I hope you will have a vacation and that it will be all that you need and desire . . .

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A brief report on the state of the University . . . As this is written our 78th annual Commencement lies in the immediate past. Taking January and June together we graduated more than four hundred seniors this year. If one adds to this figure those who remained on the campus only for a year or two, one can see readily that our University is sending a considerable number of young men and women back into our local churches. For this reason alone, I believe, it deserves the careful and sympathetic interest and support of all who are concerned about the future of the Lutheran Church in America. These young men and women, trained more thoroughly in spiritual values and Lutheran doctrine than any other similar group representing the laity, can be a tremendous force for good in our Church.

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Still at the University. I imagine that you know that the remarkable success of the Conquest for Christ offering has had some deplorable side effects on some of the enterprises which depend upon the generosity of our congregations for their support. This, you will understand, is not a complaint in any sense of the word. I must merely state the fact that quite a few congregations and individuals found it impossible to support the work of our Lutheran University this year because of their commitments to the Conquest for Christ. I must say, too, that I can sympathize with the point of view which created the situation, but I should also report to you that it has made the closing days of our current fiscal year embarrassingly uncomfortable. We shall end our fiscal year with an uncomfortable deficit. If you can still get a small offering for us, we shall be most grateful.

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Now on the brighter side . . . Our enrollment prospects for the year 1952 - 53 are much better than they were last year. We are approximately thirty per cent ahead of our schedule for the enrollment office. If this continues, we shall have approximately seven hundred new students on the campus during the fall semester. I think you will recognize that this fact is important because it extends the advantages of a Christian higher education to a larger number of people and satisfies the requirements of good stewardship. Ever since the University has been set up, structurally and administratively, for approximately two thousand students, any figure less than that is not good stewardship. We hope, therefore, that we shall have a constantly growing enrollment during the next five years. Here, too, you can be of very real help by sending us the names of your high school graduates. Many of our best students have come here on the personal recommendation of their pastors.

By the way, while I am talking about education, I find a clipping which deserves the thoughtful attention of all who are interested in the future of the pure Gospel in America. The clipping reads as follows: "A survey by the New York Times shows that the Roman Catholic education in the United States reached an all-time high in 1952: about four million students (a thirty-five per cent increase in ten years) were enrolled in more than 11,500 schools and colleges and some \$130,000,000 was being spent to

increase the school plant. The estimated enrollment by 1960 will be five million." Perhaps you should read that paragraph again. It tells more about the future of America than many long and learned essays. It also presents an overwhelming challenge to all of us who believe that not only the future of Christendom but also the future of our country requires a thorough, intelligent and persistent emphasis on the principles of the Reformation which are so largely forgotten today. Let our pastoral conferences and our teachers conferences go down to rock bottom and consider carefully how this challenge is to be met in the next three or four decades — theologically, educationally, socially. It is a great and pressing problem.

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Now to other matters. A few idle moments in a theological library permit me to page through the volume of "Lehre und Wehre" for the year 1873. As the moments tick by, I become suddenly and tremendously fascinated. The "Vorwort" by Walther runs through three issues and presents an eloquent defense of "Altlutherische Theologie." The usual Waltherian clarity of outline permits me to see almost immediately that he is talking about its profound strength, its deep and serious respect for divine revelation, its obedience to the Word of God, its submission to the sacrosanct revelation of a majestic and loving God.

This is not the place and time to discuss the theology of the famous preface. It should be sufficient to point out that here is great theology greatly presented. What interests me particularly at the moment is the magnificently eloquent language in which the entire essay is written. I believe that we can say that nobody in our church today writes English as Walther wrote German. Somehow we have lost the warmth and power which characterized so much of the writing of our fathers. I have several times noted that our little German devotional booklets, for example, are linguistically much more eloquent than their English counterparts. This is not a criticism of the faithful authors of our English devotional pamphlets but rather a reflection of the general quality of our language resources in our day. English has simply not been well taught in American high schools and colleges for several decades. It is inevitable, therefore, that the handling of the language is much poorer than it was three or four decades ago. Of course, this general criticism applies not only to our own profession but to all walks of life. Our jurists, our medical writers, and our journalists simply do not write the great, eloquent English which one might expect in a day like ours. Walther's German, by contrast, is a joy to read, entirely aside from the sound and thorough mind which the language reflects.

The transition from this point to the next is not very difficult. I have often spoken to our students about the fact that one of our major complaints about modern thought is not only its wrongness but its complete and cheap shoddiness. It is often wrong, but its greater danger sometimes lies in the fact that it is so utterly shallow and sentimental. It rides along on the surface of life. It likes to blow off the froth rather than get down into the depths of thought and being. I was reminded of all this when I saw sometime ago the famous column by Simeon Stylites in THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY in which he complains bitterly about one of my pet aversions — the canned Western Union messages which can now be sent out with merely the check of a pencil and the necessary funds. Simeon, always pungent and eloquent, refers to the fact that the Easter greetings are a strange lot. He says, "Here are three top level samples: 'Easter greetings across the miles. Here's wishing you a day of smiles.' 'Here's hello from your Easter Bunny. May your day be happy, bright and sunny.' 'From far away I wire to say, A very happy Easter Day.' (Sounds like Tennyson.)" Simeon goes on to say, "It is a disturbing thought that this Western Union theology is the one accepted by multitudes. Anything definite is blurred; the objective truth and event are blotted out by subjective feeling. Not the lilting affirmation, 'Christ is risen,' but a sentimental gurgle, 'I hope you're feeling happy.' This sort of theology forgets that Christianity did not come into the hard Roman world with a fixed grin and a purring 'Best wishes, everybody'. 'Hope you are happy!' It was a news broadcast. Something had happened: 'Now is Christ risen from the dead.'"

This Western Union theology is, of course, characteristic of far more things in the modern Protestant church than Easter greetings. It characterizes many sermons these shallow and shoddy days.

In this connection I should like to point to a remarkable review of Thomas Sugrue's controversial little volume "A Catholic Speaks His Mind." You probably remember that this essay created a great deal of comment because it attacks some of the thought and action of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in America. On the other hand, one felt uncomfortably that Mr. Sugrue was not telling the entire story. A review in the Jesuit weekly AMERICA for March 22, 1952, by a Dr. Francis E. McMahon had the following paragraphs which should be taken to heart by all of us who have the same problem. He writes: "Mr. Sugrue has failed both Catholics and non-Catholics badly. There is a great need for the promotion of inter-faith cooperation and amity. But I do not expect Protestants or Jews to dilute their theological teachings to achieve that objective; and it is equally unthinkable, and unnecessary, for Catholics to destroy their doctrinal position in promoting good will.

"The author has wrestled with an eternally recurring problem: the reconciliation of Truth and Charity. Both make their inexorable demands upon the spirit of man. To sacrifice Truth to Charity, or Charity to Truth, is to destroy, in the last analysis, the character of both."

Those sentences deserve thoughtful reading and rereading. In them lies at least a part of the answer to one of the most vexing problems confronting the Lutheran Church in America today.

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NOTES: Paging through the weekly journals I notice a series of advertisements which feature the headline "7000 More People for Dinner in America Tonight." That means that our population is growing at that rate. I do not know, of course, if the figures are accurate, but if they are only remotely correct, we have the greatest missionary challenge in sixty centuries. Each night there are seven thousand more people to be reached with the Gospel. Let that thought burn into our souls, and we shall acquire a greater sense of mission and of destiny . . .

So John Dewey is dead at 92. Let it be said clearly and directly that there has seldom been a more negative and destructive influence in American life. A philosophy which may have been good enough for him became unadulterated poison in the hands and minds of thousands of American schoolmarms of both sexes who do not know down from up. It is a curious coincidence that Mr. Dewey was born in 1859, the same year in which Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published. His pragmatism and experimentalism fitted well with the idea that we had haphazardly worked up from the primeval ooze. But the sum total of his influence (despite some good things in methods and techniques and the clearing away of educational and academic underbrush) was tragic and evil. Within a breathless moment of his death John Dewey must have known that he had been wrong, fatally wrong, for many years . . .

At one of our institutes a good brother advising caution in a certain matter quotes again and again the old proverb: "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." That is probably one of the most abused and misunderstood proverbs in the English language. Have you ever thought about its exact meaning? It is used to advise caution. It is perfectly clear, however, that angels do not fear to tread on people's toes—angels do not fear to tell the truth—angels are not especially cautious in the carrying out of their divinely given mission. On the other hand, angels fear to tread on the ultimate mysteries of life, on the awesome reality of God. They fear to tread where the rationalistic theologian, the half-baked scientist, and the perennial sophomore of our civilization rush in. This, I believe, is the real meaning of the proverb. In other words, its real moral lies in the word "reverence" rather than in the word "caution."

Whenever these random notes appear, they try to reflect a little fragment of life and thought on a Lutheran and American campus in the United States in the year of our Lord 1952. Often they are echoes of meetings and conferences with members of the faculty and the student body. They come to you, in the small and tentative hope that they will provide a few moments away from the routine of your duties and an occasional stimulant to your further thought and study.

Permit me to wish you a rich measure of divine blessing for the summer months.

With cordial greetings, I am

Sincerely yours,

O. P. Kretzmann

President

P.S. I suddenly notice that I have not mentioned a book this time. If you happen to be somewhere where you can read a sentence and then gaze long and hard into the distance, you might pick up Reinhold Niebuhr's "The Irony of American History." With the November elections looming on the horizon the volume will be instructive and interesting.

O. P. K.

P.P.S. At the beginning of these paragraphs I said something about vacations and their uses in our time. It may be that you still have some loose ends in your vacation plans. If your program is not quite complete, may I suggest that you might be interested in some of the institutes which still remain on our calendar for the summer months of 1952. The institutes which have already been conducted have been very well attended and have aroused wide spread interest. If you feel that one or the other would be of

some value to you in your personal or official life, please do not hesitate to drop me a line. We shall be glad to make the necessary arrangements for your attendance.

The following is the list of the institutes which still remain on the calendar for this summer:

- Institute of Public Relations ..... July 22-23
- Rural Life Institute ..... July 23-25
- Institute of Human Relations ..... July 28-30
- Social Work Institute ..... August 27-29

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The Institute of Public Relations, as you will have noticed from all the publicity sent out from the University, is consciously planned to help pastors and laymen in the direction of the programs of public relations in the local congregations. The program for the institute is a very practical one: Public Relations Techniques in the Local Congregation. This topic will be discussed from several perspectives: Unpopular Practices, Festival Seasons, Financial Efforts, Building Programs, Routine Church Affairs, Community Projects, Anniversary Occasions, and Church Organizations. In addition to the attractions of these intriguing subjects for discussion, several able and competent speakers will appear on the program to discuss the topics: Pastor Kenneth Hoffmann of Vicksburg; Pastor Herman Frincke of Rochester; Pastor Vic Rickmann of Chicago; Pastor Ted Gerken of St. Louis; Pastor Paul Schulze of St. Louis; Pastor Gerhardt Mahler of St. Louis; and Elmer Kraemer also of St. Louis.

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The Rural Life Institute, held for the first time in 1951, is obviously one of our most recent institutes. It promises, however, to have a long and interesting life. The program of the 1952 Rural Life Institute features Dr. Louis A. Wolfanger, research professor in land use at Michigan State College, East Lansing, Michigan, who has had wide and profound experience in geography and geology, conservation and survey, soil geography and land utilization, rural zoning and extension services. In addition, the institute will present experienced and familiar persons to whom the University owes very much: Frank Neu, newspaper editor from Wisconsin; Pastor Ed Gade of Emerald, Wisconsin; Pastor Ed Hessler of Michigan; and Pastor Walter Stuenkel, also of Michigan. These are some of the topics to be discussed: Worship in the Rural Church; The Christian in the Rural Community; Preaching from Soil to Soul; Cooperatives; and Aspects of Rural and Urban Living.

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One of the really outstanding institutes, the Institutes on Human Relations, last year received significant notice in TIME magazine. The 1951 Valparaiso University Institute committee has explained the necessity of staying in this work by the following words: "An ever-growing number of persons within the Church is aware of the fact that there is a crying need for drastic changes in race relations in the world, the nation, the community, and the Church; that the time to effect such a change is now, and that the Church can no longer stand idly by, but must condition its people to work toward the establishment of a pattern altogether in harmony with the law of love." This year the institute will devote most of its time to the problem of integration: Communicant Integration; Integration in Business; and Integration in the Professions. One of the features of the program will be an essay, "Here I Stand," by the well-known churchman and scholar, Professor Arthur Carl Piepkorn of Concordia Seminary.

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The summer institute program will end with the eighth annual Social Work Institute under the direction of Pastor Buckley Glabe, Pastor Henry Wind, and Dean Tangermann. The Social Work Institute is open to parish pastors, teachers, representatives of social agencies and boards as well as to social workers, and institutional missionaries. As always, in the words of the 1952 Social Work Bulletin of Valparaiso University, the purpose of the institute "is to study certain aspects of human behavior and to examine modern skills and techniques for dealing with problems in the field of human relations."

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A few words are in order about arrangements. The fee for the institutes of Rural Life and Public Relations will be fifteen dollars. For those people who wish to attend both of these institutes, the fee will be twenty dollars. The fee for the three day institutes (Human Relations and Social Work) will be seventeen and a half dollars. We hope to see many of you during the rest of the summer.