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Dear Brother:

As I write this, I imagine you are either attending a pastoral conference or have just returned from one. These gatherings are a great and traditional mark of our life in the Missouri Synod. My impression is that the program for these regular meetings of our clergy are more thoughtfully prepared than ever before. It is true, of course, that occasionally one hears about a conference which might just as well have been held in a trout stream or on a golf course. The majority, however, seem to make a definite contribution to the solidarity of mind and spirit which is so important for our Synod today.

My own favorites have always been the "Winkel-Konferenzen". Perhaps they have done more for the Missouri Synod than many other factors in our history. There is, of course, always the brother who pontificates on every question from the financial situation in Synod to the meaning of the Revelation of St. John. There is also the brother who is perennially concerned about the doings of another brother. There are also always two or three who feel loudly and vehemently that something ought to be done about something. All these I regard with affectionate interest. They have been with us since 1839, and I hope they will live long. They are an essential part of the Church Militant.

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Talking about conferences and in-service education I would like to call your attention to another part of this general problem. I wonder if you have looked closely at the institutes presented on the campus of the University during the summer. Many of them ought to be of very real interest to some of our brethren. Please remember that we shall be able to house and feed you at a very reasonable cost and that we sincerely hope you will be able to attend. In case you have mislaid the little, yellow folder which describes the institutes, I am here listing once more the titles and the dates of the individual institutes and seminars to be conducted during the summer months.

- Liturgical Institute — June 5-7, 1951
- Circuit Representatives — July 23, 1951
- Labor Management — June 11-12, 1951
- Public Relations — July 24-25, 1951
- Institute of Christian Thought — June 19-21, 1951
- Rural Life — July 26-27, 1951
- Church Music Institute — July 2-6, 1951
- Race Relations — July 30-31, 1951
- Religion and Culture — July 15-21, 1951
- Social Work — Aug. 27-30, 1951

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Still talking about education . . . I am aware of the fact that this occasional epistle should not discuss Synodical matters. They should be left for other and better hands. At the present moment, however, I am somewhat concerned about the alarms and excursions throughout Synod over the matter of the introduction of the Senior College into our educational system. I have already heard and seen an occasional brother mounting his horse and riding off furiously in all directions. One comment may therefore be permissible here. Whatever the ultimate decision of the proper authorities may be, the rest of us must never lose sight of the purposes and objectives of the Senior College. It is not to train scholars. It is not to foster the acquisition of additional social graces. These may all be good by-products, but the great, continuing fundamental purpose of our entire system must be to train pastors and teachers for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. This has been our strength for one hundred years. We have had a clear, sharp, simple objective, and it should not become fuzzy now. Our whole system is geared to the production of parish pastors — the men who do the work where the Holy Spirit lives and breathes through Word and Sacrament. If we forget that for the shoddy advantages of another degree or whatever it may be, we shall fall headlong into the Protestant swamp. End of comment.

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If you have any children at home between the ages of 16 and 22, you are probably sharply aware of the harmful effects the continuing uncertainty in our manpower situation is producing in our younger generation. At the present moment we at the University still do not know what the ultimate picture will be in September, 1951. May I again appeal to you to send us the names of boys and girls who should be going to college during these years? That is one of the simplest and most important things that our brethren can do for us in order to maintain a level of enrollment which will be of the highest possible service to the church. Even now it can be said that unless a shooting war starts all over the world many of them will be permitted to finish their college education. By the way, many strange and false things are being said these days in the name of patriotism. We must never forget to tell our young people that the highest and most intelligent patriotism in these troubled days does not necessarily mean blind rushing off into the Armed Forces. The beating of the drums in the name of patriotism is often not only the last refuge of scoundrels, but also the last refuge of those who have lost their faith in almost everything else. There is a time when the demands of God and the Church and the long years that lie before us must be considered more important than the shallow patriotism of orators on the Fourth of July. You will, therefore, do well to advise your young people to plan their futures as quietly and calmly as possible in these days of unrest and indecision.
When these notes reach you, you may be thinking of your vacation. A preacher’s vacation should probably be something totally different from the ways of the world. A good program would certainly include a quiet place — one good book — and as much time as possible for meditation. The meditation should preferably be a kind of contemplative prayer, which means not only illuminating but also enjoyable. Mr. Standen knows how to write. It will be particularly valuable if you are able to get some of the meditations printed for distribution to others. If I can be of any assistance, I hope you will let me know.

President
O. R. K. R. M. N. R. M. N.

Very sincerely yours,

[Signature]