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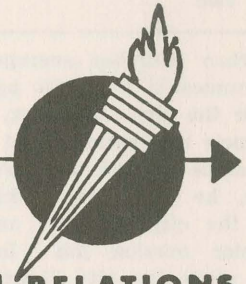
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THE VANGUARD



... THE CHURCH IN HUMAN RELATIONS

Volume 6, No. 9

November, 1959

That the Church May Lead

THE INDIVIDUAL COUNTS

The ethics of Christian race relations is the subject of much correspondence between the Executive Secretary of the Lutheran Human Relations Association of America and concerned people in the church. Such friendly correspondence has been going on between him and a person in a high executive position in the church. We thought the answer given to a question posed by the executive may be read with interest by some **VANGUARD** readers. For that reason we are in this article quoting at length from the letter referred to.

The query: "Looking into the future, the Lutheran Human Relations Association dare not limit its concern to teaching the white man to accept the colored man as a person. It must also concern itself with raising the standards of the colored man. Equal rights should be deserved. I have spoken to a goodly number of Negroes, and they realize that they, too, have a responsibility in this matter. Is there something positive that we can do to help the colored man to be accepted?"

The reply: "If you will look closely at the total program of our Association, you will find that we are consistently concerning ourselves with 'raising the standards of the colored man.' Perhaps the primary and specific reason for low standards found quite generally among our American Negroes is prejudice and the discrimination resulting from such prejudice; and it is precisely these difficulties which in our little way we are trying to help obviate.

"Your statement, 'Equal rights should be deserved,' has in it, I fear, an element of misunderstanding basic to the whole problem of race rela-

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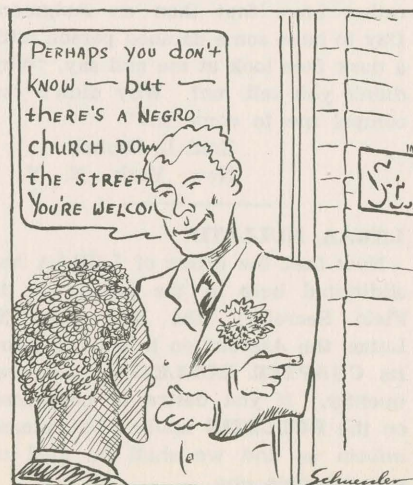
With Floodgates Open

In Luke 14:23, a part of the Parable of the Great Supper, Christ commands His church to compel those outside of it to come in, that His house may be filled. Those of us who labor in the Word and doctrine know that this is necessary, because a man by nature resists the grace of God. To be saved from hell, he must be compelled by God's law to see His sins, and be compelled by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel to accept forgiveness by faith in the Lord Jesus. All of which means that we must really work to win any man for the Kingdom of God.

This truth makes it seem strange indeed to hear some pastors and congregations say with regard to the Negroes in their communities: "We know we have a responsibility toward these folks. But, we're afraid to really work at winning them, lest, learning that our doors are open, they will deluge us, and we will be unable to cope with sudden mass integration."

How groundless is such a fear! Would God it were otherwise, but the truth is this: Negroes too must be "compelled" to come in. Also in this respect they are no different from the

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"And compel them to come in"

Luke 14:23

A LOOK AROUND

By David S. Schuller

Eighteen months ago a number of the Lutheran churches in north St. Louis were facing with increasing concern the problems of transition areas — the migration-out of vast numbers of their members, loss of financial support, the coming-in of other ethnic and racial groups. Each church faced the problem alone with the unvoiced fear about its adequacy to meet the future. A few attempts were made to develop a regional strategy but without too much success. Then they approached the St. Louis Lutheran Council of Churches and asked what might be done.

After some study, the Mission Development Committee suggested a metropolitan-wide self-study program. After the usual initial selling of the idea, some 55 churches participated in the study directed by Dr. Richard Sommerfeld of Religious Research Associates. Just one month ago the first phase of the project came to a close. Each church received an individual analysis; in addition, a community study was made of the resources and challenges confronting the Lutheran churches in this area. During the course of this next year, the commission hopes to implement the developing of a common strategy in the five regions of the metropolitan area.

As far as we know, this has been both the most extensive and intensive urban study of its type ever attempted. Those of us who have worked closely with the St. Louis Study are convinced that it is a tool which many urban areas are searching for — often unknowingly.

While we can't reproduce the 73 pages of the mimeographed community report, a number of the findings were significant for other urban areas:

(1) The suburban churches, as one would have expected, were growing far faster than the city churches in terms of communicant members: the

suburban churches averaged 78 new communicants per year against only 55 for the city. However, when one subtracts the transfers and child confirmations to find the "raw" mission gains, he discovers to his surprise that the city churches are doing a superior mission job. In the last four years the city churches gained 21 mission members on the average against 13 for the county churches.

(2) Our Lutheran churches have been more effective in winning the white-collar workers than in gaining the blue-collar workers. Some of us have been concerned that the Lutheran church in America is becoming increasingly a "class" church — one which is most effective in dealing with the white middle class. While efforts can be found in every metropolitan area indicating some work among the underprivileged, for example, usually it has been no more than a token effort. Thus while the total population contained 43 per cent in the white collar occupations, 55 per cent of Lutherans were found in these occupational classifications.

(3) The report stated bluntly that the attention of the Lutheran Church to the non-white residents of St. Louis has been "one of the dark pages in the history of St. Louis Lutheranism." Approximately 6 per cent of the white population is found within the Lutheran Church. In the words of the survey report: "Non-white baptized Lutherans account for approximately .5% (one-half of one per cent) of the total non-white population. The difference is terrific!"

(4) It should not be necessary, the report commented, to state the responsibility of Lutheran churches to serve the entire population. It ended with the ominous warning: "... the future of the Lutheran Church in St. Louis is strongly tied to the attention and interest which the Lutheran Church gives to the ever-increasing non-white population." The alternative seems to be a steady decline in the membership of Lutheran churches in St. Louis in the future.

(5) Realistically, the answer lies in a strategy of parish outreach and service which includes all of the Lutheran churches within a metropolitan area. The intention is not simply that a given church in an area of racial change face the challenge while the county church some miles removed carries on a conventional program. A total strategy demands that the

energies, resources, and financial strength of the entire Lutheran community be directed toward areas of greatest need — regardless of their location or their racial composition!

FLOODGATES OPEN

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rest of us sinners. As a matter of fact, my experience as the pastor of a predominantly white congregation has been that, even with the doors "open," extra effort is necessary to win Negroes. For, they are not second-generation middle class Germans, and need to be assured that they will be accepted by a group mainly made up of such. They also need assurance that they will be helped to adjust to and to learn to appreciate a liturgical and cultural heritage which usually is not their own.

And sometimes the work of winning them is made immeasurably more difficult by the bird-brained bigotry of other Lutherans, like the one in my area who aligned himself with segregationists and used his tongue to say "God said He's on our side." God forgive him, and all of us who in any way have hesitated to heed Christ's command to compel also Negroes to come in. For, let us remember, that behind their dark exterior are souls dark in ignorance and sin, people for whom Jesus died. Let us remember that these are people who need God's precious Law and Gospel no less than any others. Let us remember that our God-given job as the church is to provide such as they with this Law and Gospel.

Therefore, away with all timidity and foolish fear of "mass integration." It's very unlikely that it will happen. And, so what if it does? I would rather have that than on Judgment Day to have some damned person with a dark face look at me and say, "Why didn't you tell me? Why didn't you compel me to come in?"

Emil L. Dinkel
New York, N. Y.

LHRAA BULLETIN

Now that the office of LHRAA has additional help in the person of its Field Secretary, the Rev. Karl E. Lutze, the Association intends to issue its **CHAPTER BULLETIN** more frequently. If you desire to be placed on the **BULLETIN** mailing list, please inform us and we shall be glad to accommodate you.

On Being A "Moderate"

To speak the whole truth or — following the approach of the so-called moderates — only to approach the full truth, that is the difficulty confronting many churchmen today. "Shall I say what I believe is true about justice for all in our society, and complete acceptance in the church, in attendance, in membership, in participation at the Lord's altar, and in the outreach in the community, or shall I merely hint at the truth?" Should the Christian minister temper his witness according to the degree of acceptance of that witness anticipated by him or should he make a completely honest and forthright witness according to the dictates of his conscience and the known needs of the times and of his hearers?

To take an unequivocal stand in keeping with the demands of a true witness to Christ in the area of race relations and the Christian's responsibility in that area may, even in a more liberal metropolitan center of the North or West, awaken animosity among members of the church, making the future of the pastor at that place an uncomfortable one. But in many areas of the South even a moderate position may and probably will awaken deep-seated prejudices among members of the congregation as well as the people of the community.

In a very well written article appearing in the *New York Times* (Sept. 27), Ralph McGill, editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, describes "the agony of the Southern minister"; and in the entire article of more than 5,000 words he writes about so-called moderates among the clergy of the South. This is how Mr. McGill describes the witness of the "Alabama-born, Southern-reared and educated Rev. Robert Blakely McNeill," who until recently was the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Columbus, Ga.: he "had never once used his pulpit to urge integration." (Boldface our own) Even his most bitter enemies admit as much. But in an article published in *Look* magazine in May, 1957, he had advocated a moderate course of creative contact between the races as a necessary approach to racial harmony and Christian duty. He emphasized that he rejected sexual and contrived social mixing. But he also made it plain he had meant that Negroes should, and must, be accepted in the administration of community affairs."

No doubt it takes a good bit of courage for a minister in prejudiced communities to go even as far as the Rev. McNeill is reported to have gone in witnessing to the truth according to both the Law and the Gospel. And there are now many so-called "moderate" ministers who are equally as courageous as the Rev. McNeill.

The *Times* article tells what happened to Mr. McNeill when his "moderate" witness — and that's what it was — was made. He was dismissed from the pastorate of his church. It came to light later, according to the *Times* article, that the "Spanish-Inquisition-like hostility" practiced against the Presbyterian clergyman "was fostered by a hard core of about fifty church members," but that they were a very small minority within the "1200 professed Christians in the congregation." When the Rev. McNeill, again according to the *Times* article, had suffered a coronary thrombosis three days after his dismissal, "members of his congregation manned a reception table outside his hospital room in two-hour shifts from early morning until late at night to greet and register visitors and to protect him from intruders. There were special prayers in hundreds of homes, and his wife and three children, who suffered their share of vile language and death threats by phone, were never without friends." The *Times* article says that the experience of the Rev. McNeill — save for the heart attack and the drama of his unexpected firing — is not unusual in the South." The article then makes this significant comment: "In varying degrees it is shared by all Southern ministers and priests **who have the courage to take even the most moderate of positions on racial integration.**" (Boldface our own)

A further description in the McGill article of the stand these ministers take is as follows: "First, Christians and Christian churches should, as a matter of principle, be in the forefront of the forces for racial tolerance and obedience to the law, particularly in the matter of public school integration. Second, as a token of this principle, white congregations should cease to reject **the very thought of a Negro crossing the threshold; although Negroes need not be admitted to full membership, any who wish to worship should be welcomed.**" (Boldface ours)

On the Other Foot

"The question of discrimination is always a lively topic in the newspapers here. We have, of course, many Jews here, many Negroes, many Puerto Ricans. There are always letters in the papers, some bitterly opposed to these groups, and these are always followed by letters in defense of these minority groups. There is constant agitation, but we are slowly forging ahead toward a better attitude. It is amusing — although at the same time rather depressing — to note the inconsistencies in people. The woman with whom I live thinks it deplorable that people of other races shouldn't be welcomed into the church. But when I suggest that there should be no discrimination in housing and that surely having a nice Negro family living in the apartment house where we live would not be a bad thing, the shoe is on the other foot."

Anne M. Engelbrecht
Brooklyn, N. Y.

And the End Result?

The die-hard segregationists oppose a "moderate" approach with as much vigor and poison as they would a true and completely honest witness to Christ and to justice. If the witness does not present a complete picture of what Christian fellowship and social justice is, the opponents may "smell a rat" or suspect something "in the woodpile" and for that reason use every ounce of energy to combat the "moderate" approach.

But there is another reason for looking with misgiving on the "moderate" approach. What are the moderates trying to do? Evidently they are trying to save something. Are they

When Hearts Bleed

The joys of the Christian ministry surpass anything else in this earth, but my heart bled and my "blood began to boil" when I received the following letter:

"Dear Pastor: At the time of my marriage I was in . . . and I phoned a Lutheran minister there in regard to our marriage ceremony and attending church. But here in . . . the churches are segregated and there is no Negro Lutheran Church that I know of. My husband is Baptist, and, since I would not be able to attend the Lutheran Church, the pastor there thought it better if I joined my husband's church rather than not attend at all. So we were married by a Baptist minister and soon after I joined the church with my husband. We have been here in (another town) a short time and since we had already joined the Baptist Church I have not investigated about a Lutheran Church, so the above will explain why I am no longer a communicant member. Give my regards to the many members whom I so enjoyed knowing."

Once again the Body of Christ has been split cruelly by the double-edged axe of discrimination and segregation. We need the Lutheran Human Relations Association to show us the right way, the Scriptural way, God's way, the holy way. The Holy Spirit gives us grace to hold the temperature down, but until **all are one** in Jesus, my heart still bleeds.

George Hans Liebenow

trying to save themselves? Are they trying to save the church — or what we have chosen to call the institution?

COMING OFF THE PRESS SOON . . .

THE NATIONS ARE WAITING

The Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Valparaiso
University Institute on Human Relations

Included are all essays delivered at the Institute, and the sermon by the Rev. Herbert Lindemann on "Human Relations in Proper Perspective." Pastor Lindemann said: "We sometimes fail to realize that what we are speaking so loudly that the world cannot hear what we say. Little Rock gets in the way of our testimony to a universal salvation and to an all-inclusive Church. If we fail to love and serve one another within the household of faith, we can hardly expect the outside world to take our preaching seriously."

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Are they trying to save our nation?

As far as saving the nation is concerned — which is a secondary consideration of the Christian — being “moderate” will hardly do. The 17 hundred million so-called colored people of the world, whose friendship we need today for national survival, will not be satisfied by our being “moderate” in our approach toward the removal of discriminations practiced against them, being “moderate” by working toward a **future** complete acceptance of them as people, members of the human family. Of course, the “moderate” approach toward our improvement of race relations in Columbus, Ga., or Cicero, Ill., involves Negro-white relations in this country. But the colored peoples of the world are inclined to say something to this effect: “As you did it to the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.”

It is in the context of confessing Christ before men that our Lord says, “He who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of Me.” And “He who finds his life shall lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.” Matt. 10.

Shall the message of the cross of Christ in its full sweep, with implications of fellowship and human justice and acknowledging all human beings as brothers of Christ through the incarnation and our brothers through creation, shall that message be tempered to save the church, the institution? Whose is the Church? Is it our job to save the Church? We can neither build it nor save it. That is the work of the Spirit of God. We have the promise, not based on man's tempering the witness to Christ according to the atmosphere of the community in which we witness but on

the power of the Spirit of God, that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” — the Church.

THE INDIVIDUAL COUNTS

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tions as it confronts us as Christians and citizens of the United States. For the difficulty that underlies the whole problem of discrimination is centered in what our sociologists call stereotyping. That is, a pattern of treatment is established for a group. The individual then is ignored since he is not considered as an individual but simply as a part of the group for whom the pattern has been established.

“We do not claim that every Negro should be accepted into a local congregation made up of white people, but only such Negroes who qualify according to the New Testament principles regulating membership in the Church. — We do not believe that every Negro congregation should be accepted into membership in a District, but only such congregations of Negro constituency that qualify according to the confession and practice established by the Church. — Every Negro child should not be accepted into the school of the community maintained by the taxes of all, but only such Negro children as qualify according to the same standards of health or scholastic accomplishment set up for all children. — Every Negro should not enjoy equal rights in housing, in public accommodations, in restaurants, and hotels, but only such as meet the standards set up according to the rule of justice established for all citizens.

“We have arrived at the very point of discrimination when we believe that Negroes in general must measure

up to these standards before Negroes who do qualify are permitted to enjoy ‘equal rights’ with other qualified persons.

“In answer to your question, ‘Is there something positive that we can do to help the colored man to be accepted?’ I would say that the first thing that we must do is to see that the standards apply equally to all, and, having done so, to help those Negroes who do not qualify as we would help whites who do not qualify, to overcome the personal handicaps that keep them from qualifying.

“The question which you raised in all honesty is one that brings us right to the heart of the problem involved in race relations both in the Church and in society in general.”

Dixie in Utah

Sandwiched between a whole array of comments on action by the legislature of the State of Utah was the following item in the **New York Times** of March 15th: “A minimum civil rights law, designed to insure accommodation of minority groups in Utah's hotels, motels, and restaurants bogged down in the Senate.”

It is possible, of course, but unlikely, that the law did not pass because it required only a **minimum** of civil rights.

The time to work toward major civil rights for minorities is when the minority is a small percentage of the population, so that when the minority increases a good pattern will already have been established and accepted. The same thing applies to the church. Let the Christian policy be fully established, not necessarily on paper, but in the minds and hearts of Christian people before a “problem” arises.

LUTHERAN HUMAN RELATIONS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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