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1959

## The Vanguard (Vol. 6, No. 10), Dec 1959

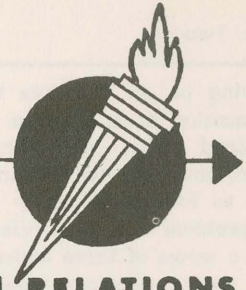
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# THE VANGUARD



... THE CHURCH IN HUMAN RELATIONS

Volume 6, No. 10

December, 1959

## That the Church May Lead

### "GOD SO LOVED" . . . ALL OF US

I have just spent a fruitless day and a half trying to find some assurance in the Scriptures that the Son of God came to be "my personal Savior." Being as human as the next person, I have always rather relished the thought that, however much of a failure I may have been otherwise, I was at least enough of a sinner to trouble deep Heaven and prompt the Heavenly Father to send His Son to save me. As a matter of fact, what had always thrilled me most about the Christmas story was the fact that it seemed to be a story about God and me — about my sins, tragic in their consequences and cosmic in their significance; and about God's special and personal concern for me as it lies revealed in the manger in Bethlehem.

But, as I say, I can find no support for these views of mine anywhere in the New Testament. What I keep running up against is all these plural and collective nouns and pronouns: "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son"; "I am come

that they might have life"; "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"; "glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." The way these words read, you don't even have to be a first-rate sinner to qualify for the love of God. All you have to be is people. God loves me, not because I am who I am but because I am one of those fallen creatures, one of those people, whom He refused, despite all provocation, to hate.

It is to avoid unflattering conclusions like that that we are tempted to go beyond the simple words of Scripture to probe their "deeper" significance. It was not an easy thing that God the Father did at Bethlehem. His only-begotten Son was the best He had to give, and only a love incomprehensible to man could have prompted God to deliver up the best that He had into death. It is not hard for me (free, white, 21, and Lutheran) to see why the God of all beauty and loveliness might have wanted to reclaim the race which has produced the world's greatest literature and art and music; which has built great cathedrals and libraries and museums; which gave the world champagne and nylon and tweed, the split-level house and the long, sleek Cadillac. But

(Continued on Page Four)

## A LOOK AROUND

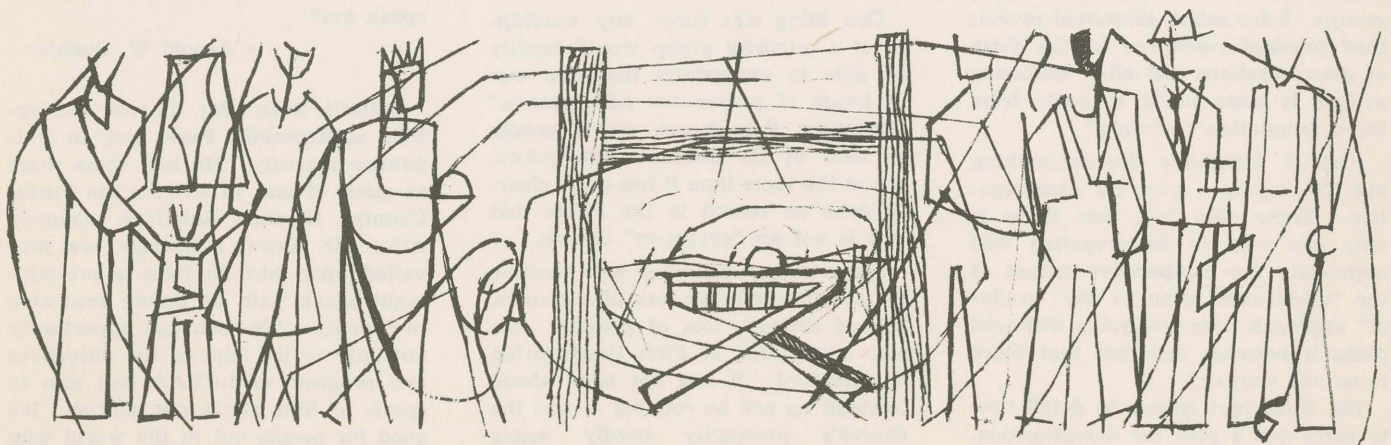
By David S. Schuller

The other evening a mission development committee met in one of our Midwest cities. During the session the stories of three Lutheran churches were cited.

The leadership group of the first was concerned about the potential appearance of Negroes in the new suburban chapel which the church was just completing. As tempers became frayed, they began pushing for a resolution: A statement in writing that no Negroes would be permitted to worship there. They made clear to the young pastor the fact that he was not the man they wanted as their pastor; they wanted a "segregationist."

The second church was interested in bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people. So the congregation approached the local mission board with a proposition. They would undertake the finances and leadership of a new suburban site if they would have the guarantee that their original church site would forever remain Caucasian. It is located in an area predominantly Negro.

The pastor of the third church spoke, a man respected for his wisdom and leadership. His church has been



This sketch by Artist Richard R. Caemmerer, Jr., depicts Mary, a shepherd, and a wise man at the Christchild's manger. A laborer, a farmer, a businessman and a family have joined them. "God So Loved" . . . All of Us.

carrying on an effective ministry in a transition area; but the church has remained white. He suggested to his elders, however, that this might be the time to look realistically at the entire problem of human relations. Perhaps a series of three addresses at the next voters' meetings would be helpful. In no uncertain terms the elders informed that pastor that the topic must not be raised — even in the most academic of fashions. Phone calls and personal appointments in the following week indicated that such unjudicious action might well lead to the exodus of some of the finest Christian families in that congregation . . . some who are carrying its financial load. Three Lutheran churches in one city . . . dedicated to the glory of God and the spread of the Gospel . . .

## II.

Next, a book you should know about: **Action Patterns in School Desegregation: A Guidebook**, by Herbert Wey and John Corey (published by the professional fraternity for men in education, Phi Delta Kappa, Bloomington, Ind.). This is a "practical" book in the best sense of the term. It is based upon the experience gained in 70 school districts in undertaking a program of desegregation. Written in an informal journalistic style, it is enriched with the quotations, reports, letters and observations of those who learned by doing.

Part I emphasizes the need for determining readiness and preparing for desegregation. "The important point is that the majority of systems succeeding in their programs did undertake to ascertain readiness in one form or another . . ." "Special attention should be given to preparing citizens of low income and farm groups. Information submitted reveals that physical resistance in the form of demonstrations and other harassing actions is more likely to come from these population elements."

Part II highlights decision-making and developing a plan for desegregation. Some who feel that there is only one way to desegregation will appreciate the comparative values of the "all-at-once" plan to the "gradual" approach. "In analyzing different plans it becomes apparent that there is no one answer."

The third part relates in detail how to carry out a plan for desegregation. The responsibilities of various groups are examined; methods of working

with the press are explored.

The final section examines the educational program. Particularly on the planning and technique level, churches should gain valuable knowledge from that which is currently taking place in the schools. The church dare not wait, though, until all the answers are in before she begins to practice Christian love toward her new-found neighbors in welcoming them as neighbors and sincerely inviting them to share with her, in full fellowship, the blessings of God's grace and love. The command of the Head of the Church must compel her to act now, that is, when the opportunity presents itself. With that in mind she will welcome the knowledge of every possible, good technique based on experiment and sound scientific know-how.

## The Fish Church — Presbyterian

On a recent trip to New England it was my privilege to visit the already famous First Presbyterian Church of Stamford, Connecticut. A new and unusual church, the building is skilfully constructed of blending structural concrete and stained glass to give the total effect of a giant fish.

Visitors from many places seek out this strangely beautiful house of worship. And each visitor is warmly welcomed by an usher who meets guests as they enter.

This would not be unexpected in our churches today. But in this church where (the sermon suggested) people of generous means hold membership, where I saw no Negro in choir or congregation, the man who welcomed me at the door was Negro.

One thing was sure: any worshiper of a minority group would readily be able to understand that this was "a house of prayer for ALL people." Obviously, this church wants people to look at its unusual architecture, but at the same time it has quite clearly gone on record to the effect that this is not an "exclusive" church.

Some of our churches who hesitate to integrate, fearing loss of members, loss of support, loss of prestige, etc., etc., might look at First Presbyterian of Stamford. It has not been afraid to stand up and be counted — and the church's prosperity hardly seems wanting.

-- Karl E. Lutze

## "TRUMBULL PARK"

By Frank London Brown

(Henry Regnery Co., 432 pp., \$3.95)

This is a novel about what happened when Negro families first moved into a Chicago public housing project. The author in real life was one of these Negroes and therefore well equipped to tell this story.

The novel is a vivid, moving account of the violence, the reaction of the various families, and the strange orders which prevented the police from effectively ending this shameful situation caused by a neighborhood unwilling to have Negro neighbors.

It should be disturbing to every American to think that such things could take place in a great American city in the middle of the twentieth century.

I recently met the author and inquired how he felt the churches of Chicago had reacted to this situation. While he felt that a number had given some aid and support to the oppressed families, only the American Friends Service Committee had, in his opinion, completely supported them. In his opinion, if leaders of the major denominations had demanded that the riots be stopped, their position as moral leaders in the city would have forced the city administration to take action. Unfortunately, the strong moral protests never came forth.

Trumbull Park, like Little Rock, is a familiar name to many people throughout Asia and Africa. Millions of people in the newly independent nations are solemnly observing both American democracy and American Christianity. Can Christians remain silent when loyalty to both Christ and country demand that we strongly speak out?

-- Arnold W. Buehler

**Editor's Note:** Mr. Brown, the author of *Trumbull Park*, was in Valparaiso recently. He had come there as guest of and to address the Porter County Human Relations Council. After Mr. Brown's address, we prevailed upon him to have a pre-midnight snack with us before returning to Chicago. We then had opportunity not only to tell him of the objectives and program of LHRAA, but also to speak to him about our Christ. It's good for people out in the world who are fighting discrimination to know

(Continued on Page Four)

## SUICIDAL WASTE

If the population of a country is heterogeneous, there is but one course that the church can pursue in preparing its leaders and using them. It is at best ill-advised in a country like ours, with people of every racial and ethnic strain making up its population, for the church to educate its professional workers in an environment of segregation as has been the case with the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference since the turn of the century. And when the pattern of segregation in higher education in the church has been liquidated and all "sons of the prophets" study together, it is equally ill-advised for the church to accept *a priori* that its ministers of Hawaiian extraction serve Hawaiians, Puerto Ricans serve Puerto Ricans, Negroes serve Negroes, and Jews serve Jews. There are two reasons for making this observation; the one is theological or doctrinal — and the columns of **The VANGUARD** have elaborated on this point previously; the other has to do with that which is practical and has in it the concept of wise Christian stewardship.

According to a **New York Times** news item of September 27, Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell is convinced that segregation is harmful to the development of our national economy. He was scheduled, according to the **Times**, to address a Southern audience in a Southern city. Secretary Mitchell's speech, as this news item says, was delivered for him by George Lodge, Assistant Secretary of Labor. Mr. Mitchell warned that a "critical factor" in the nation's economic future is segregation's waste of a "vast reserve of human talent." The Labor Secretary's address, the **New York Times** says, was "a sharp denunciation of segregation policies," and he termed them "suicidal" because "they drive out persons with potential skills that will be badly needed within a generation."

In the church there is a need of the very best talent that the Holy Spirit supplies. To discriminate in theological training or in higher education in general on the basis of race or ethnic background is tantamount to "quenching the Spirit" or frustrating the work of the Holy Spirit.

To return once again to the **New York Times** article, we find this statement: "In his address Mr. Mitchell

cited a recent editorial in the **Charlotte (N.C.) Observer** that pointed out that most Negro engineers and accountants 'must leave the South if they are to work.'" And Mr. Mitchell is quoted as having added the statement that the Negro "may represent the very kind of person that the Southern economy most needs."

That remark of the Secretary of Labor has its direct application to the church and its ministry. It is to be hoped that the segregated schools of higher learning, now being maintained by the Synodical Conference (83% of which is The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod) will soon be eliminated so that the young people of our largest minority group will soon be assimilated into the other established schools of the synods now comprising the Synodical Conference.

When that happens, perhaps an even bigger hurdle must be jumped — the graduates of these schools must be offered to and received by individual congregations on the basis of the graduates' qualifications and not on the inconsequential difference of national, ethnic, or racial grouping. Although here and there one finds pastors of minority grouping serving white congregations, by and large church officials in general still assume that candidates for professional offices in the church must still be placed in congregations according to a pattern of segregation. And judging according to the thermometer of attitudes of congregations generally, they are not willing to disregard the laws and mores of segregation when they make application for and accept someone to be their minister or other professional church worker. The government, industry, labor, and the sports are far in advance of the Church — Roman,

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Said Dr. Marguerite Cartwright, an Institute speaker, . . . "Empty declarations are not enough, for they deepen cynicism, fail to create confidence and inspire trust, but we must proclaim that all men are equal in the sight of God, live it and believe it, or we will reap a terrible harvest."

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Protestant, or Lutheran — in this respect.

**The VANGUARD** is committed to a discussion of this crucial matter in the life of the church until segregation has been so completely whipped that "white" churches will want "non-white" ministers and other workers if they can qualify for the job. In that way only can the church develop and use the best personnel that the Holy Spirit wants it to have.

By the way, when this article was in preparation, a note was received from an undersecretary of the United Nations. His name: Ralph J. Bunche. Know him?

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**"GOD SO LOVED" . . . ALL OF US**

(Continued from Page One)

what about all these other people? What about the Australian black-fellow running around half naked in the desert? What about the repulsive Ubangi with their lips pulled out of shape and their necks stretched out like a plucked turkey's? What about those sneaky Chinese and those lazy Indians and those wild-eyed Papuans? Are we supposed to believe that God loves that kind of riff-raff? After all, they're not much better than animals. In fact, most of them don't even want to be civilized.

"God so loved the world"; "whosoever will may come." Well, all right. Maybe they will be white and civilized in heaven. Maybe the glad tidings of great joy include assurances that the black man will not always be black, that those who have been cursed with offensive odors will some day be deodorized, that the warmth from the heavenly halos will straighten out every kinky hair. There was a rather nasty little poem going around a few years ago:

Look from Thy sphere of endless day,  
O God of mercy and of might.  
In pity look on those who stray --  
But only if their skin is white.

We don't have to go that far. If God wants these people, the least we can do is let Him have His way. After all, having them as brothers in the In-visible Church isn't like having to live with them or worship with them.

"God so loved the world"; "beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." But how am I supposed to love people that I can't even force myself to like? Just look at the kind of people you run up against. You invite them into your home and they don't know what fork

to use. You invite them into your church and pretty soon they're trying to get everybody to sing "Throw Out the Life Line." You let them attend school with your children and pretty soon they want to marry your daughter. You let them move into your neighborhood and property values go down. You give them a job and they start acting like they were as good as you are. For heaven's sake, you don't even choose to fall in love with your wife. It just happens. So how can you force yourself to like anybody else?

"God so loved the world." "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." Commandment? Can love be commanded? Certainly even God Himself cannot command us to like another person. But is there perhaps a difference between loving and liking? Do I cease to love myself at those moments when I cannot help disliking myself? Does God like the sinners whom He loves, or did He, in love, send His Son to die for unlikeable people? "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

O holy Child of Bethlehem  
Descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin and enter in,  
Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell:  
Oh, come to us, Abide with us,  
Our Lord Immanuel!

-- John Strietelmeier

**"TRUMBULL PARK"**

(Continued from page two)

that within the church at least some people are concerned. It is then that they become willing to hear what we have to say about "our Jesus."

**THE "MALADJUSTED"**

Have you ever had the opportunity of hearing that truly great young American, the organizer of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and author of *Stride Toward Freedom*, Dr. Martin Luther King? In an address he said recently, "We can't slow up. We have a date with destiny. I call upon you to be maladjusted. I won't be adjusted to humiliation, discrimination, or any form of second-class citizenship. The destiny of our nation is in the hands of the maladjusted."

**THE JEWS — OUR CONCERN**

This writer spent a day recently visiting a gentleman in Toronto, Canada, who is working among the Jewish population of that city for the obvious reason of winning them for Christ and membership in local Christian congregations. He is a Hebrew Christian of the third generation. During the Hitler program he was a parish minister in Warsaw, Poland. He and his family were providentially saved. His father, a second-generation Christian, was shot. His mother, too, escaped, and is now making her home with her son. He is an engaging speaker and one of the best authorities on Jewish-Christian relations on this continent.

The reason for paying him a visit was to become better acquainted with him and possibly to engage him as a speaker for the 1960 Valparaiso University Institute on Human Relations. More about the gentleman in Toronto later. — The Institute is scheduled for July 29-31.

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