

A Tribute to Herbert Lindemann

(An edited transcript of presentations at the Institute Banquet by David Truemper, John Nelson, Jerald Pipping, Walter Bouman, Jill Knuth, and Philip Gehring, with a response by Herbert Lindemann.)

Truemper:

As announced in our publicity, it is our desire to honor the ministry and the work, the example, the life of service and teaching of Pastor Herbert Lindemann. We probably have a huge fund of stories to tell to Herb and about him. We won't risk telling all of those tonight. His life has been rich and his ministry full, and this room is full of many who have been beneficiaries of that. A few of us will use the right to say something about our debt to Herb. Permit me to do the simply objective things.

Herb was born on the 17th of April, if I'm told correctly, in the year of '09 and thus is inside of two weeks of birthday number 80. He was ordained to the Sacred Ministry in 1932 and thus observes the 57th anniversary of ordination this year. Some years into that ministry -- I shall not use numbers at this point -- he married Ruth and they have three children, corresponding in mystic number to the three parishes that Herb served in his ministry. In Milwaukee, briefly, in St. Paul, Minnesota longer, and longer still in Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

Not to be limited to parish ministry, Father Herb served as a visiting professor at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis for two quarters. That's a half-a-one more than I was able to do once upon a time for reasons that we won't go into here. My students tease me for being one of the few professors in history to have been fired from a guest professorship. Herb fared better, although he is far more notorious than I. He had, as you know, in 1945, the temerity as a young pastor and a theologian in the church to affix his signature to a document called simply "The Statement" and much of the debt that many of us owe to him dates to that and to the kind of life and witness and vision of the Church and its life that was represented by those "Forty-four."

Father Herb was also a visiting professor at Valparaiso University after his retirement from Redeemer Church in Ft. Wayne, where, as some you know, he and Ruth embarked on this wild adventure of serving as dorm directors in the mens' freshmen residence hall on this very campus. If you would like to have great fun, get them to start talking about the things they are trying to forget about that year in Wehrenberg Hall.

Herb's scholarly career included the publication of a number of important and helpful and significant works that are a part of the record of liturgical renewal in American Christianity. Settings of the *Psalter* to Gregorian tones appeared in 1940, a precis thereof as *The Sunday Psalter* in 1961. His labor of love for a breviary for Lutherans produced *The Daily Office* in 1965, tragically rendered obsolete by the adoption of a three year lectionary. We are still in his debt for the treasure trove that is *The Daily Office*. Several volumes of sermons have been published and in 1972 there was published the significant essay on renewal in American Lutheranism, *The New Mood in Lutheran Worship*.

We who are the Institute of Liturgical Studies of Valparaiso University are especially in his debt, for he served for eighteen years as Chairman of this Institute, presiding with that kind of genial leadership that is his trademark in things liturgical and in things institutional as well. We are pleased, Herb, that you could be with us tonight and that you gave us permission to seek to honor you and to give thanks for your life and work. But for a few stories and a few reminiscences to indicate the size of the burden of debt that we owe to Herb, I call first on the youngest member of the Advisory Council, Pastor John Nelson.

Nelson:

I was one of those freshmen in Wehrenberg Hall, so I hope the memories aren't entirely bad and I know I speak for several of us who were freshmen that year. The "old man," in the course of the year, became "Father" and remains to this day Father for many of us. There are three things that I particularly give thanks to Herb for.

When I was a rubrically constipated freshman, I remember getting my membership card to the Lutheran Society for Worship, Music, and the Arts going around with great pride showing people that I was a member of this great organization. Then Herb asked me where my membership card was to Lutheran Human Relations Association of America and said anyone who understands liturgy also understands that the Church works in the world--and that was the beginning of my understanding of what Pastor Barb Lundblad pointed out so eloquently this afternoon, that liturgy and life are inextricably tied to each other.

Second, Herb, for me, was a model of what it meant to be a pastor. His sermons are warm and eloquent, evoking almost a feeling of one of the prophets or one of the saints of old speaking words of wisdom. His celebrations of the Eucharist were done with the same warmth and the same hospitality that you experienced at Herb and Ruth's home eating Sunday dinner. Somehow ministry for Herb was not something that happened on Sunday or in the pulpit or in the office, but was something that happened in all of life. And that is something I fervently pray that I and other pastors may emulate in their ministries.

The third gift is perhaps the most important. I was one of those people who thought that perhaps Christianity and the faith were something you knew, something you understand, and from watching and living and loving Herb, I somehow learned, not from his words, but from his life, that Christian faith is something that is lived and it's in its living that it is most fully manifested to the world. For those gifts, Herb, I give you great thanks, as do we all.

Pipping:

The year was 1961, the city Ft. Wayne, Indiana, the school Concordia Senior College. And it was fall and I was a first-year student there, living in dormitory letter F. And we came around to Sundays and the question was, "Where will we go to church?" I had been to Holy Cross Church several times and that parish across the highway, Gethsemane Lutheran Church, which one of the seniors told me, a bit later on, would come to be known during Lent as "Go to Dark Gethsemane." Well, in any case, one of those Sunday mornings inevitably rolled around and I had not

made a choice about where to go to church and I did not have a vehicle of my own and Jim Clark, whom some of us know here as "Caesar," lived across the hall from me and I was telling him of my dilemma. He said, "I'll check." And I left my dormitory room door open and I could hear Caesar yelling in his yelling style down the hall, "Is there room for one more guy in the car going to Redeemer Church? Pipping wants to go to church." And the answer was yes and so off we went.

There at the late morning Eucharist, I met Father Herb for the first time. First, as he presided at the Eucharist and preached, and I heard this strange group of singers in the gallery known as the St. Gregory Choir. Later I had a chance to sing a bit with those troops.

When I think of Father Herb Lindemann, I think principally of a passage from St. Paul the Apostle, where Paul said, "I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel." Father Herb, I give thanks that you are one of my treasured Fathers in Christ through the Gospel.

Bouman:

Part of the question, Herb, is where one starts with stories. One of my roommates in seminary was Lou Nuechterlein and in 1953, Lou became Herb's assistant at Redeemer. And that's the beginning of my set of stories with Herb. I was part of Lou's wedding and so it wasn't very long after he was married and settled into Ft. Wayne that we came visiting and I met you. It was one of the really great moments of my life and I treasure it to this day. But some of the other stories may be just a bit more interesting.

Jan and I were married in 1957 and honeymooned, of course, at the Lutheran World Federation in Minneapolis. Not right away at first, but eventually, we made it to sessions and Herb and Ruth were there. And Herb and Ruth took us to dinner one evening in Minneapolis or in St. Paul--I don't remember the restaurant anymore--but I remember the conversation because Herb has the capacity to kindle vision and excite clergy even when they are honeymooning, which is a remarkable achievement.

My first experience with the Liturgical Institute has to do with Herb. It was here at Valparaiso, in June of 1961. I'm trying to remember where we met, and my memory is that maybe it was in this building and maybe this building has been redone since then, but we were in a small room. I think there were about 40 of us here at that Institute that summer and I was asked to give a presentation on the statement on the Lord's Supper that the LCA had adopted in 1960. I was a pastor in Albany at the time, Albany, NY, and we had two small children. Jan and I drove at night because that's when the children slept best in the car.

We left more hastily than I usually do, and as a consequence I had forgotten both my clerical collar and my black shoes. In those years it was almost an unwritten rule that everybody who came to the Liturgical Institute wore clerical collars and black suits. So the shoes were no problem; I just bought another pair. The clerical collar was a problem. John Damm lent me one. But Herb was presiding at the sessions and one of my memories was that Joe Sittler was at that session--that's the first time I met Joe, it was a marvelous experience--and Phil Hefner came along with Joe and was at the sessions of the Liturgical Institute, but Herb's presidency was marvelous.

It was the kind of encouragement that a young scholar needs and never forgets. I asked Herb whether he remembered this and he has little memory of the occasion, but I remember it and will continue to remember it as long as I live. Herb's capacity to introduce and to preside over discussions was the kind that gives encouragement to people who need encouragement, who are perhaps at the beginning of their careers, or at the beginning of enterprises in which they have both difficulty and doubt. And Herb's words of encouragement to me stayed a part of my life to this day.

The stories continue. My parents retired to Ft. Wayne in 1967. My father had a stroke and my mother and my father settled there. Jan and I visited Ft. Wayne often and always on the holidays because by then I was teaching. The problem that confronted us was where to go to church in Ft. Wayne. It was really never much of a problem:

Redeemer was the place where we loved to go, partly because we could always count on a Eucharist on Christmas Eve, or on Easter day, which one couldn't count on anywhere else in Ft. Wayne, and partly because the preaching was always to the point of the Gospel. One of the things we discovered as we went to Redeemer in those years was that the congregation was filled with faculty from Concordia Senior College who discovered, Herb, in your leadership of worship and in your preaching, the same kinds of things that we discovered.

We have since now learned to experience Herb and Ruth in retirement and it's wonderful. Their home in Albuquerque has been a place for us to visit, to stay, to be encouraged again.

I have to say that in the years that I was a seminary student, the discovery of the courage and vision of the people who signed the statement in 1945 became a kind of lodestar for many of us, a way of looking into the future, a way of hoping for the possibilities which the Christian community represents. There's a sense in which one looks back at those years and one could say it didn't amount to all that much, because basically what the people who signed the statement in 1945 were about was simply Lutherans finding a common life in the Gospel in this country. That doesn't seem like a large vision in the light of the kind of agenda that Barb Lundblad laid before us this afternoon.

The agenda is now, of course, much more global. It has dimensions that none of us dreamed of in those years, but when we were seminary students and looked back at the few people who pointed the church that we were a part of in the direction of that statement, one has to say probably with the prophet Isaiah that green sprouts from stumps that are cut off may well be God's way of pointing us all into the future. I could not be more grateful to anyone in this room than I am to Herb Lindemann for the vision that he gave us, for the human companionship in significant moments in my life, and for what he continues to represent. Thank you.

Truemper:

Herb would you do us the favor of joining me here? We would like to give also tangible expression to our gratitude and admiration to you and that's easier if you're here at the podium.

We have two items to present to Herb tonight. The first: having the good fortune of Jill Knuth's presence and show of banners, we commissioned a banner from Jill for presentation to you, which is unveiled in public now for the first time. Jill, would you please come here and say a few things about your banner.

Knuth:

I think probably you can't see it very well from out there. The light's not great and it's meant to be a banner to hang in a house, not in a church, so it's not that big. When I was asked to say a little bit about this banner presented to Pastor Lindemann, I had mixed feelings. I always have mixed feelings about explaining my work. I try to communicate ideas and feelings visually. If you don't see what I mean or what I'm trying to say, then I haven't succeeded very well. It's like a comedian who has to stop and explain why a joke is funny. However, I'll go ahead and tell you what I'm trying to say and you may decide if you can see it.

I haven't had the blessing of knowing Pastor Lindemann personally, but some of his friends and colleagues and former students have told me a little bit about him. What filtered through their tributes was the image of a direct, honest, warm, and caring person who has given much and influenced many. He is a preacher, a liturgist, a story teller, a shepherd. The symbolism on the banner is obvious, if you can see it.

There are giving hands and a spirit-filled heart at the bottom here, reaching up through the Sacraments, symbolized by the water and the grapes and the wheat, to the sheep in his flock. All this is accompanied by song and prayer. That's the most subtle element, which are some sort of lines up there at the top. The predominant colors are those that are associated with the liturgical seasons. The composition of the banner is an important part of

expression. The elements are arranged to radiate upward and outward, abundantly and vigorously.

You will notice that there is no frame or border around the banner. The hands come from somewhere outside down here and the other elements continue to radiate outward past the edges of the fabric. I like to think of God as the Great Projectionist in the sky. He's beaming down upon us His infinite picture of life and love and salvation. Our projection screens are too narrow and our lives are too small to reflect more than a fragment of this image, but through people like Pastor Lindemann, we can see enough to long for an eternal place in what was, what is, and what is to come.

Truemper:

Secondly, we commissioned from retiring University Organist and long time Church Music Seminar Director Philip Gehring a hymn concertato on "*O Filii et Filiae*," which will be sung in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist tomorrow morning in the Chapel of the Resurrection.

Gehring:

At the keyboard I might improvise, but not in front of all of you. As a part of the celebration, I was asked to write a setting of the hymn "O Sons and Daughters of the King," which is the Hymn of the Day for tomorrow's Eucharist. The setting involves choir, brass quartet, organ, and a congregation who will sing six of the nine stanzas. The three central stanzas, which tell the story of Thomas' doubt and later affirmation of the Christ, will be presented by the choir and instruments. Thus, the composition partakes of the time-honored tradition of choral and instrumental music which involves and radiates outward from the congregational song, each musical element making the contribution for which it is best suited.

Herb Lindemann is certainly a noble son of a divine King. In fact, when I first knew him as he sat as Chairman of this Institute, emanating wisdom and authority, I thought for a while that perhaps he was the king. Now that I know him better, I know that he isn't the king (Ruth probably could have told me that a long time ago), but that he is the gracious and effective servant of the King and that he has brought many of us to a fuller and

more joyous participation in that kingdom. Some years ago, we both attended a reception following a church event (I'm sure Herb will not remember this) at which a woman who was until then a stranger to both Herb and me observed to me of Herb, "There's a man I would like to have for a pastor." Those who have had him as pastor are indeed blessed and those of us for whom he was a liturgical instructor, confessor and guru have also been richly blessed. Among those countless gifts of love, of which we sang yesterday and will sing again tomorrow, I am proud to include this composition, dedicated to Herb, and to present him with this copy.

Truemper:

Father Herb, would you please grace us with your words.

Lindemann:

I have been trying to think of the Frenchman who was asked along about 1795, "And what did you do during the Revolution?" who said, "I survived! It's really no great trick--you just have to live long enough!"

I am grateful to you all!

I was thinking a little bit about a few things that have happened during my ministry. Speaking of survival, the ministry at St. Paul was something like that because everything we accomplished liturgically was done at the cost of blood, sweat, tears, bloody noses, and black eyes. We had a group in the congregation who viewed every innovation as a form of Crypto-Romanism and somebody was moved to say at one time that it wasn't so crypto.

We founded a society, the SPPK, the Society for the Propagation of the Posture of Kneeling. And we facilitated that posture by a devious method. In the parish newsletter, we depicted the plight of an overweight woman of say 300 pounds who got stuck between the pews because, before every Eucharist, we had a confessional service and the big moment of that confessional service was kneeling down with one's rear end toward the altar for the confession itself. And the description was, "What would happen if somebody couldn't get up again?" The description depicted the ushers coming down with six screwdrivers. So

everybody got the point and there was no further protest about the SPPK.

Another thing that happened was that the congregation celebrated its 45th anniversary, and in the parish newsletter we published a list of things which it would be real nice for the congregation to have as anniversary presents, and somebody surreptitiously stuck into that list the item of a processional cross. Well, at that time (this was back in the '40's) no Lutheran had ever seen or so much as heard of a processional cross, but Arthur Kreinheder, who was the son of my father's predecessor in Ft. Wayne, had bought one for his church in Detroit, and the church decided not to use it, so Arthur had this thing stuck in the closet of his apartment in Detroit. He read this in the newsletter and said, "Well, my old congregation up there in St. Paul would certainly appreciate it." So he sent it to us in St. Paul and the great question arose, "What shall we do with it?"

It was solemnly decided to take a popular vote on this momentous issue, and, to give the people an opportunity to know what they were voting for, it was decided that at the anniversary banquet, which was held in the banquet hall of Montgomery Ward's, a large establishment near Snelling Avenue in St. Paul, at the end of the ceremonies the choir would come into the banquet hall, preceded by the processional cross, the choir singing "Onward Christian Soldiers" with the cross of Jesus "going on before." So everybody got the idea of what this thing was and what its intended use was, but after it was all over, the question still was before the congregation, "What shall we do with this confounded thing?" So, as I said before, we voted on it and when the results of the vote were reported to the vestry, (that was called a church council in those days) one of my worthy opponents, when the result was announced 3 to 1 in favor of using the processional cross, asked, "Who counted them?"

So life has been very interesting. In Ft. Wayne, of course, the great thing was the Senior College which was, as has often been referred to, a veritable Camelot. It was a beautiful place to be and to be near and to be ministered to during those blessed years in Ft. Wayne.

Finally came Valpo, very briefly. John Nelson, who spoke to you so graciously a moment ago, was roommate in Wehrenberg Hall with Randy Lee. These were two guys who understood what the university was all about and we are good friends to this day, and I treasure that friendship very deeply.

Finally, I'd like to pay tribute to two other people. One is to my dear wife, whose outgoing personality has effectively substituted for my inbred personality. And the other person is my father, who died in 1938 and at whose funeral we did all sorts of marvelous things. It's wonderful when a person dies while he's still active, as my father did. At his funeral (maybe some of you here were present) there were 1000 people, which is, I'm sure you pastors will agree, an unusual number to turn out for a funeral. So, to my wife and to my dear departed father, I owe a lot of the fine good things that have been said about me tonight, and to you all--I treasure your friendship and support and hope for the continuance of the same in the future. Thank you very, very much.