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The Vanguard

Lutheran Human Relations Association of  
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## The Vanguard (Vol. 7, No. 3), Mar 1960

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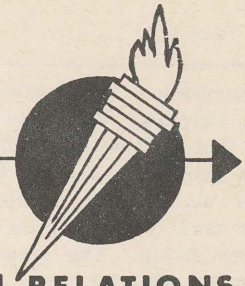
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# THE VANGUARD



... THE CHURCH IN HUMAN RELATIONS

Volume 7, No. 3

March, 1960

## That the Church May Lead

### IT'S NEWS NOW

All media of communication are continuing to feature race relations these days. The time was when, in the memory of many of us, any race relations news was something very exceptional; possibly it was available, but the public in general was disinterested and apathetic. The church was able to move on complacently within the pattern of segregation in which it found itself. The voice of the minority group involved was hushed into silence by the seeming futility of it all and by the fear engendered in them — the Negroes — during decades of slavery and segregation.

Whites in the North were secure in isolation from the specific problems involved, and whites of the South still clung firmly to the whip of white supremacy. But with the emergence of a Martin Luther King, Jr., and his Montgomery bus boycott, and similar evidences of Negro strength, the whip is no longer the symbol of force it once was and it now threatens to turn into a serpent whose poisonous bite can enfeeble and kill the mighty one, who until now, by the mere crack of it, expressed his defiance of God and man and caused the lowly folk to cringe into the dust. The whites in the North, sold down the river by their own greed and pride — fearful of their jobs, the loss of their real estate investment, and the uplifted eyebrow of their social peers — are deeply involved, perhaps as much now as their Southern white brethren.

And so race relations has become news that people listen to and read about, news eagerly sought out by communications professionals.

### Voting in Dixie

The Supreme Court has spoken once again: The names of thousands of Negroes in Louisiana, which had been

removed from the lists of registered voters, are to be replaced and are to remain there — at least until some new demagogic circumvention is contrived. — “How long, O Lord, how long?”

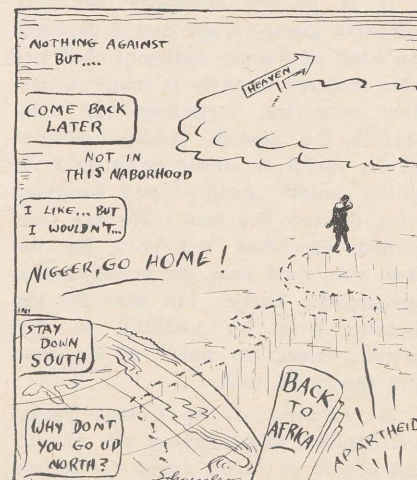
### Negro Youth Alive

The whip of white supremacy has cowed Negro youth in the South into silence, distorting their personalities into fearful Uncle Tomish yes-men or into bitter misanthropes. It is a miracle of divine goodness that many come out from under the lash of the whip the stronger because of man's inhumanity to man.

Now they are “marching on” to the restaurants to be served as humans and to the very step of the one-time capital of the Confederacy in “good ole Alabam.”

Yes, the Senate of the United States is again engaged in the shadow boxing of a civil rights filibuster; and few of us hope that justice and truth will triumph in that august assembly of statesmen. And if something does emerge in the form of a civil rights bill a wee bit better than the very weak compromise civil rights legisla-

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“They ought to stay in their place.”

## A LOOK AROUND

By David S. Schuller

As the Church enters Lent, 1960, racial tensions in our country are greater than they have been for quite some time. The Senate battles over civil rights legislation. By mid-March the House will debate an alternate bill. Negroes in Chattanooga are being jailed in their fight for service in city restaurants. Extra police patrol “the Village” area of New York, fearful of overt outbreaks of racial clashes. Several Southern states remain committed to a policy of “massive resistance” over against school integration. Recent instances of the most crass anti-Semitism demonstrations have stirred the nation.

The news moves too quickly to attempt any intelligent comment on a monthly basis. However, one observes several needs washing to the surface as the waves of recent weeks roll on:

First, Christians must work to re-establish communication with others. Those in the South talk about the “icy silence” which has blanketed honest communication. In the past people at least talked about the racial situation. Currently, people express racial views only to those with whom they are confident of agreement. A clergyman or business man who feels that of necessity he must keep up positive relationships with those in his particular group is fearful of being misunderstood. Thus no communication takes place. Although a few inter-racial meetings still are conducted, they are fewer in number and the attendance has dwindled. Even personal contacts in public between Negroes and whites have diminished in the face of possible misunderstanding. In a period of fear and withdrawal, the witness of a Christian who quietly and confidently takes his stand is of great significance.

Secondly, leadership becomes crucial. The Princeton survey regard-



ing integration in Guilford County, North Carolina, two years ago indicated that approximately 20 per cent of the people stand committed either for or against the measure. Some 60 per cent, then, are open to aggressive leadership. The great block of people are listening for a voice from the outside to suggest and to lead the way. This has been demonstrated repeatedly in polls taken on various issues involving racial integration. If a public voice vote is taken, many who would vote secretly in favor of the minority group will either abstain from voting or guiltily vote with the majority — rather than face the possible loss of prestige and status.

In Front Royal, Virginia, the churches were approached for the use of their buildings for the conducting of segregated classes after Governor Almond closed the public schools. The First Baptist Church was one of the first to grant permission. Its pastor, a former Air Force Chaplain, was one who had protested the governor's action. He indicated that of 800 resident members of his congregation, only 153 voted on the question concerning use of the church building. Forty-three members publicly opposed the measure. But the pastor stated: "As many as 50 others who were present did not vote . . . Some walked out of the meeting when they saw the vote would not be taken by secret ballot. They could not bear to stand against the motion and face the threat to their security . . ."

Thirdly, only the church with a virile theology has something to say in a crisis moment. Some churches seemingly have been built on a foundation of "friendliness." The milk of human kindness is a thin mortar with which to hold human bricks together when crisis strikes. The lovely old neighborhood of like-cultured, like-moneyed, like-colored families cracks under the influx of other racial and ethnic groups. If the strength of a church is centered in its homogeneous people and their special interest groups, then its strength is drained away in such a situation. But where the church has been planted and nurtured about a vertical axis involving the redemptive activity of God, where it has dealt with the bedrock reality of life and death, of sin and forgiveness, of love and service — then it has a message to proclaim and a task to perform.

As my friend, the Rev. Walter

Kloetzli, warns, the church must beware of absorbing the American business outlook which measures everything in terms of the externals of growth and success. Faithfulness and heroic service are not always measured on a line graph.

## A STATEMENT ON ANTI-SEMITISM

At the recent meeting of the Board of Directors of LHRAA, a statement on anti-Semitism was adopted. It was then sent to both the secular and religious press. The statement was no doubt thought to have merit and to speak to the needs of our times, since it was published by a number of newspapers and periodicals, both secular and religious.

Although it is somewhat late to publish it in **The VANGUARD**, the official publication of LHRAA, we are doing it nevertheless. It would be ostrich psychology to think that anti-Semitism has been drowned in the depths of the sea now that we have in the past week or two heard of no new anti-Jewish violence or other expressions directed toward that group of people. Anti-Semitism has its roots deep in the history of the past centuries.

As a witness to the Christ and the Christian ethic that is involved and with the thought that anti-Jewish sentiment might continue to linger on in the minds and hearts of Christians, the followers of the greatest Jew that ever trod the face of the earth — even Jesus Christ — the statement referred to is herewith offered to our readers.

"It is hardly necessary for any Christian group to say that it deplors the kind of vicious behavior that has been directed recently in many 'Christian' countries, including our own, against the Jewish people. Hatred of any racial or ethnic group is a sin which, unless repented and forgiven, must destroy the soul. We are concerned, therefore, not only for the Jew who must bear the brunt of this unreasoning hatred, but also for the Gentile who, by yielding to this hatred, closes his heart to the love and mercy of God.

"As citizens of the United States, we deplore this singling out of any one ethnic or racial group for hatred and contempt. We believe that the

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## That Lutheran Witness Article

"Is the Church Retarding Integration?" is the title of an article that has perhaps called forth as much reader response as anything **The Lutheran Witness** has published in recent years. At least that is the impression gained not only from the vigorous response published by the **Witness** itself but also from the many unpublished letters addressed to the **Witness**, copies of which were sent to **The VANGUARD** office. By calling the attention of our readers to the unprinted letters, it is not our intention to criticize the **Witness** for not having published them. It is possible that the editorial staff still intends to publish more of the letters that they have received.

**The VANGUARD** subscribes neither to the manner in which the subject of race relations was approached in the article in question, nor to the very weak theology revealed in both the formulation of the questions posed by the article, nor to the answers given. It may be another example of the providence of God, using the foibles of His children to carry out His eternal purposes. For it is possible, judging from all the correspondence that has been brought to our attention in connection with the **Witness** article, that some of our best minds have been at work trying to formulate adequate answers to the article. Put together, this correspondence may make a framework of theological thought that could serve the Church in an area of great need in the sixth decade of the twentieth century.

Perhaps the article to which this paper takes emphatic exception, together with the letters addressed to **The Witness**, both pro and con, could be compiled into a booklet and offered for sale to an eager Christian reading circle. LHRAA will welcome the opportunity to cooperate with the **Witness** in such a project. In the meantime — and let it be said again — we encourage and strongly urge **The Lutheran Witness** to be a continuing witness to the truth as it is found in Christ Jesus and as it applies without fear or favor to a question haunting the minds of many of His followers. Race relations is the question in question.







## POSTSCRIPT TO DEERFIELD

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and was quite upset that another neighbor had been talking about the religious aspects of it all. She became quite indignant that someone should introduce God into this discussion. As if this were something altogether foreign to **His** interests!"

It is not unusual to find that people who support discrimination and segregation feel only social and economic concerns are involved in the matter of race relations, and when someone implies that **Christian principles** are involved, they shout "Foul!"

Perhaps a few verses of Scripture ought to be recalled, such as:

"Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? . . . Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. (I John 3:17-18)

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17) K.E.L.

## ANTI-SEMITISM

(Continued from page two)

responsible agencies of law enforcement are fully aware of the serious dangers which anti-Semitism poses to our national institutions and we assure them of our cooperation and support in their continuing effort to bring the apostles of hate to justice.

"To our Jewish friends and neighbors we give our assurance that we shall continue to work toward the elimination of every form of thinking and behavior based on misunderstanding and lovelessness between Christian and Jew."

## IT'S NEWS NOW

(Continued from page one)

tion of 1957 — what then? Will the astute Southern church-going demagogues be beaten into silence by the new legislation? If past performance is criteria of any value at all, the answer will be no; they will not be beaten into silence by such legislation any more than they were by the 1954 desegregation decision or by the drawn bayonets in Little Rock, Arkansas.

But the Negro youth may cause them and all their anti-democratic and anti-Christian christian constituency to take a second breath, and then a second look at their loveless selves. For old apostles of hate are being confronted by young apostles of love.

As the great Mahatma Gandhi was the leader of the many millions of India in 1932 by the "feeble" weapon of non-violent resistance and the subjection of his already weak body to a hunger strike, so, too, it seems that an American admirer of the great Mahatma, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., may emerge as the spiritual leader of the upcoming Negro youth of the South.

Against such force the great British Empire was impotent and finally capitulated. The result may well be that the Dixiecrat force of faggot and lyncher's loop may yet prove to be weak and powerless. Then the honorable Senators in Washington may call it a day, fold up their army cots, go home and sleep, making filibuster, cloture, and further civil rights laws unnecessary, for the force of love will have triumphed over the strong hand of the conniving demagogue in Washington and the fear-ridden, hate-filled negrophobe of Wilcox County, Alabama, and all the regions of darkness surrounding it. That would be news!

Pray for the peace of the city.

## LOVE AND RIGHTS

As this issue of **The VANGUARD** was about to go to press, two significant news items came across the ether waves. One was an indication of a victory for civil rights: a number of restaurants and lunch counters had yielded to the "protest demonstrations" in two Southern states by beginning to serve Negroes without humiliating them by compelling them to remain standing if they wanted to be served, or by refusing to serve them under any circumstance.

Neither the proprietors nor their white patrons had to be converted, from hatred (or even prejudice) to love, to accomplish the change. They were simply brought to acquiesce to the rule of law and order.

That's all that the state can demand, and it is the measure of protection and rights that citizens may justly seek by all peaceful and legal methods.

Or must members of minority groups wait until the motivation of love is present in the hearts of the majority?

The second news item was a most shocking one. A Negro staggered into an oil company's shack in Houston, Texas, blood bespattered, with his clothes torn from his body and "KKK" cut into his flesh. According to his story, some white men grabbed, man-handled, and cruelly beat him. When he was finally released, he was able incoherently to tell his story.

The Church of Jesus Christ must continue to witness to the love of God in Christ Jesus, which love must become the life of God in man, each man loving his neighbor as God in Christ loves all men. In the meantime, though, the state has its own God-given task of securing for all citizens social justice and equality of opportunity under the law.

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