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Lutheran Human Relations Association of  
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# THE VANGUARD

... THE CHURCH IN HUMAN RELATIONS

Volume 7, Number 8

September, 1960

## *That the Church May Lead*

### INDIAN CONFERENCE RETREAT

No little interest was expressed by **VANGUARD** readers and friends of LHRAA in the First Conference Retreat on the Lutheran Church and the Indian American held in August of last year. It is assumed that they will be equally interested in the second Conference of the same nature.

There are many cultures, but there is one humanity created by God and redeemed, by Christ, many of whom are still to be sanctified by the Spirit of God and united with God and His children in the Church of Jesus Christ. To be a clear witness to that truth in a world of division and strife is the specific purpose of LHRAA and its mouthpiece **The VANGUARD**.

It would appear to be natural, then, not only for the Association, but also for concerned friends of the Association, to concern themselves with the relation between the Lutheran Church and the Indian American. For that reason, the following report.

Eighty-seven persons attended the Retreat which was held August 2-5 at Fortune Lake Bible Camp, near Crystal Falls, Michigan. Among the registrants were twelve Indians from a number of tribes. The non-Indians in attendance were men and women who devote full time to work among the Indians, pastors whose congregations are in communities where there are Indians as neighbors, and official representatives of church bodies or mission boards who are interested in the Christian approach to the Indian American.

The Retreat program included presentations by persons professionally trained in the area of the Retreat's in-

terest: Dr. Russell Carter, of the National Fellowship of Indian Workers of the National Council of Churches of Christ in America; Mrs. Helen Parker Mudgett, of the Department of Anthropology of the University of Minnesota; and Mr. Wayne Pratt, Assistant Director of Education of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. A number of Indian registrants participated in various aspects of the Retreat program.

Sixteen persons in attendance at the Retreat were members of the Synodical Conference; all others, excepting the non-Lutheran program participants, were Lutherans of National Lutheran Council connections.

The Aid Association for Lutherans and the Lutheran Brotherhood supplied \$1,000 each for Retreat Scholarships.

The major essays read at the Retreat will be mimeographed and offered in

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Conference Retreat on the Lutheran Church and the Indian American



## A LOOK AROUND

By Martin H. Scharlemann

### 1. The Congo

Ten years ago it was a word to rhyme with "Bongo" on a popular record. A few sophisticates knew that it was a name for an area where uranium was available for men anxious to devise the ultimate weapons of destruction. Today the Congo occupies the limelight. It is a region that calls for the utmost diplomatic skill in Dag Hammarskjöld's handling of a trouble spot that could readily spell disaster for mankind. It is also that place on the map where all of the colored man's hatred of the white man's arrogance rose rapidly to the surface when Belgium chose to withdraw her officials and her troops.

The future of man's history may well be determined, under God, by what is taking place in seething Africa, where Christian churches have been at work for many years and in considerable force. Here is a continent still open to the churches of the world. If we had the men and means right now and, above all, a less cumbersome bureaucracy in the field of missions, our church could seize one of its greatest opportunities for making a direct contribution toward winning the world for our Lord and Christ. But we have more time and energy to engage in organizational fratricide, trying to reconcile the irreconcilables. This creates the illusion of great activity; and men love their illusions. These are easier to live with than the responsibility of losing one's life to find it in a distant land among the people of a different culture that has never heard any Christian teaching at all, not to speak of **pure** doctrine. What really comes to our mind as we say each Sunday in the General Prayer, "... Help us by true faith and a godly life to prepare for the world to come; doing the work which Thou hast given us to do while it is day; **before the night cometh**, when no man can work?"

### 2. When the Night Comes

What does happen to the work of the church when night comes is eloquently described in last month's **Harper's** by Milton Mayer. The article is entitled "Christ under Communism," which is worth every minute it takes to read. In the author's discussions with his perceptive hosts beyond the iron curtain the matter of racial discrimination came up as part

of a larger question on America's social problems. Mr. Mayer was asked whether any real attack on this problem could take place without fundamentally changing the structure of society as a whole. He guessed that it could not. Said his host: "And now I must say something very hard for me to say. Our social structure has been changed fundamentally, as you know. And all these problems have been attacked with the full force of our society."

The old order included unlimited opportunities for the Russian Orthodox Church to apply Christian principles to the social order. It preferred, however, to remain comfortable, on the side of the aristocracy. Where illiteracy prevailed, it frequently turned to look the other way. Where poverty and inequality oppressed its people, it chose to join in the exploitation. There can be little doubt that Christians, and Christians alone, are in a very real sense responsible for the fact that Communism could black out more than a third of the world's inhabitants. There was a burden to discharge. Our Lord left us in no doubt what it is. But the church too frequently "said, and did not."

Are we doing, or just saying? In the past few years a great deal more has been said and written in our midst on the question of human relations than in many decades before then. But is much happening? Or being done? Yes, in some few places a great deal has been undertaken. In general, not really much. Now "the night cometh, when no man can work."

### INDIAN CONFERENCE

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booklet form at one dollar per copy to those interested. The Proceedings may be secured from Dr. Walter Carlson, American State Bank Building, Moorhead, Minn.

A committee to plan the next Conference Retreat was elected and is composed of the following persons: The Rev. L. L. Spaulding, Rolla, N.D.; the Rev. Walter Carlson, Moorhead, Minn.; the Rev. Walter Olson, New York Mills, Minn.; Mr. Edward Hunter, Chicago; the Rev. R. G. Braem, Cass Lake, Minn. The Rev. L. W. Halvorson, Intercultural Outreach, National Lutheran Council, and this writer were elected as consultants.

At a special meeting of those of the

Synodical Conference in attendance at the Retreat, the following was adopted:

"We suggest to our Districts that they concern themselves with the American Indian by activity within the separate Districts, and support this Conference (The Lutheran Church and the Indian American) by appointing at least one concerned person who shall have a sustained interest in the work and the Conference.

"It was resolved that all of us take the responsibility upon ourselves to supply Dr. Schulze's office with names of persons interested in the work with the American Indian."

Members of districts in attendance at the Retreat were appointed to serve as representatives to their respective districts for the promotion of the Conference Retreat and its objectives.

In the fall of last year, the Conference Retreat Committee drafted a Statement of Purpose for the Retreat. The Statement was presented to the Retreat in August and was adopted with minor changes.

Our Indian Americans are, among all our minorities, perhaps in the most dire need of the church's concern and love. To help stimulate Christian concern, which must result in the outpouring of Christian love, this article is being published and the Statement of Purpose previously published is being brought to our readers' attention again, this time in its corrected and adopted form.

#### Statement of Purpose

"This is a free Lutheran conference organized to share experiences and knowledge that pertain to the Lutheran Church in its relation to the Indian American.

"The purpose of the Conference:

(1) To study Indian population trends;

(2) To learn of the Indian's present-day needs, social, economic, and religious; of his distinctive cultural roots and outlook;

(3) To ascertain the degree to which the church has in the past been functioning to meet these needs, and what the church is doing now to meet them;

(4) To study the life of the Indian on the reservation, in the village, and in the big city, and to try to ascertain where Christian work should be carried on and how it should be done in keeping with Indian traditional values as well as with Christian principles, so that mistakes made in the past, in

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## To You Has Been Given . .

Conceivably it could happen at a convention of almost any conservative church body. But it did happen at one of them this summer. A theological professor had been accused of speaking the wrong words, and because of it many feared that through him young theological students would be contaminated with false doctrine, heresy.

An official of high rank was present at the convention. He assured and reassured the group of churchmen that the professor had been consulted and that those who talked with him were convinced of his orthodoxy; the professor even stated in writing his views on the doctrinal matters in controversy.

Time was of the essence. The convention had been in session in the morning and afternoon for several days. This discussion about the theological professor was being carried on in an evening session. Since there was no motion before the convention, and since other important items were on the agenda, the chairman, after many had had opportunity to express their concern over the alleged false teachings of the professor, moved on to the next order of business. But those still doubtful about the professor's orthodoxy asked for the floor again, and the chairman acquiesced. — What kind of a chairman would he be if he tried to railroad through a doctrinal matter at a convention of a conservative church body? — But it happened again and again that night: the chairman, after some discussion, would proceed to the next order of business, only to be brought back again to a discussion of the professor and his alleged unorthodoxy.

The day following the night-time session in which so many of the delegates expressed their profound interest in "reine Lehre" (pure doctrine), something else happened which is our reason for reporting on what took place the night before.

The secretary of missions made his report. In it he told the convention that the church must follow a pattern of gradualism when confronted with the opportunity to integrate members of minority groups into the fellowship of the local congregation. He warned against the use of what he called "force." He also told the convention that there was only one integrated church within the geographic area represented by the convention. The

congregation he referred to and mentioned by name is a downtown Gospel-mission type of church.

In the same geographic area represented at the convention there are twelve or fifteen metropolitan areas with perhaps twice as many congregations in communities where there is abundant opportunity to integrate minority members into the fellowship of the congregation. Yet the mission secretary, as a professional mission counselor, advised gradualism.

It is a well-established fact that the churches of the district, by the mission secretary's own confession, were very slow, "gradual," in welcoming and accepting minority group members into the fellowship of the church, a basic reason for Christian mission work anywhere. It is probable, too, that with the best of efforts to be put forth in the future — in view of past performance on the part of congregations involved — the integration process will most likely be very "gradual," very slow. But the obvious difficulty found in the secretary's presentation was not what happened in the past and what might be anticipated in the near future; it was rather the advice he gave to the churchmen present to accept gradualism as God's pattern for them to follow.

Although it would be out of place to try to say why gradualism was set before the convention as the correct pattern of congregational procedure, there are well-known reasons why many churches throughout the United States, in the North as well as in the South, are and have been following a pattern of gradualism; and many even stand forthrightly opposed to the acceptance of non-whites.

What are some of those reasons? "The congregation is not ready." But

## S. S. S.

### Special Southern Service

There are those in the South who have been "marked" because they have received mail from organizations known to be opposed to segregation. These people may subsequently be subject to economic reprisal, bullying, and threats, as well as outright violence.

Those desiring to receive **The VANGUARD** and other literature under the S. S. S. program would receive their mail in first-class sealed envelopes, with the return address listed:

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what right does the congregation have to say it is not ready when Christ, the Head of the Church, places before them the responsibility to act? — "The members fear they will lose in personal prestige," or "they will be inviting the decline in the value of their property"; "the congregation's budget will be jeopardized"; "the white prospects will be lost to the church;" and finally, "such social intermingling will lead to racial intermarriage." They assume that these things will happen and they are unwilling to stand up and be counted for Christ's cause. Unwilling to suffer for His Name's Sake.

Pure doctrine, and faith — its supposed concomitant — are hollow

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## About Closing Schools for Negroes

The August issue of **The VANGUARD** brought to the attention of its readers the resolution adopted by the Synodical Conference at its August meeting of this year to close Immanuel Lutheran College at Greensboro, N. C., and to rebuild Alabama Lutheran Academy and College at Selma on a new plot of ground at an estimated cost of one million dollars. Our article expressed real satisfaction over the decision to close the Greensboro school, and dissatisfaction because of the resolution to rebuild the Selma Institution.

The members of the Board of Directors of LHRAA had presented an overture to the Synodical Conference advising the closing of both institutions intended, for all practical purposes, as schools of higher education for Negroes. At the annual meeting of LHRAA, the Association approved the overture of the members of its Board.

In order that the school in Selma may be rebuilt, the money must be allotted by the several constituent synods of the Synodical Conference. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod constitutes about 85% of that Conference. Which means that, if the resolution is to be carried into effect and the school is to be rebuilt, 85% of the million dollars needed must be supplied by The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. If our readers feel as we do in the matter, we would urge them to communicate with those in authority to make the financial appropriation, asking them not to vote for such an appropriation.

The Fiscal Conference of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod will be in session when this issue of **The VANGUARD** goes into the mail. It is our hope that the Missouri Synod,

in its zeal to work more effectively among our Negro citizens, will not undergird segregation by building a school of higher learning **for Negroes** in the year 1960. That would be a mistake of catastrophic proportions.

### TO YOU HAS BEEN GIVEN

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mockery if the doctrine and the faith do not produce a willingness "to suffer for His sake."

But those who were vocal the night before, saying in essence, "give us pure doctrine," "give us the professional head of the teacher of falsehood," were now strangely silent when told to take it easy in receiving members of minority groups into the fellowship of the congregation. Not one of them arose to challenge the secretary and his proposed pattern of gradualism. They had lost their power to resist, not false doctrine, but the temptation to go the easy way in Kingdom work. Were they unwilling now to challenge because they did not want to "suffer for His sake"? Doctrine and faith are neither doctrine nor faith without a willingness to "suffer for His sake."

We who are concerned about orthodoxy might do well to think hard and long about what St. Paul wrote to the Philippians: "It has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in Him but **also suffer for His sake.**" (1:29)

"The Roman church is making tremendous progress among the Negroes here in Chicago and elsewhere. The fact that their parochial schools have remained in these inner-city areas is probably the outstanding point in their favor among our brethren of another color." — James G. Manz.

### INDIAN CONFERENCE

(Continued from page two)

working with Indians or other groups such as the Negroes and the Jews, shall not be repeated in a time when patterns of social living are changing fast.

(5) To address itself toward the elimination of sinful prejudice expressed in unchristian, un-American, and unjust practices; such educational procedures and such action to be taken in keeping with the need, specific opportunity, an evangelical spirit, and the rights of the individual to preserve his heritage.

(6) To study the spiritual maturity of our Christian churches as expressed in their attitudes toward Indians, especially those who live in their community, need their love, and are potential prospects of the local congregation.

(7) To offer its findings, through its programs and activities, to all Christian churches concerned with the matter of Indian-white relations and to all Lutheran churches in particular.

(8) To the end that its studies and plans be not merely sound academic theory, the very necessary social contact between white Christians and Indians — a potent educational process in itself — shall always be an integral part of the planning for and fellowship at the conferences themselves.

"And finally, the ultimate reason for the Conference's existence is to give a visible expression of repentance over the corporate sin in which we are involved, as seen in inhumane practices and in the apathy in which the church is often involved in the presence of such practice, and that the glory of God might finally come, through Jesus Christ, in our relation to the Indian American."

## LUTHERAN HUMAN RELATIONS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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