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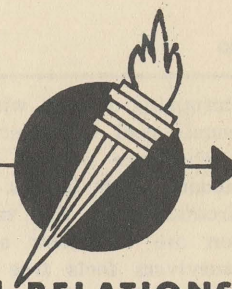
The Vanguard (Vol. 7, No. 9), Oct 1960

Lutheran Human Relations Association of America

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THE VANGUARD



... THE CHURCH IN HUMAN RELATIONS

Volume 7, Number 9

October, 1960

That the Church May Lead

KNEEL-INS

The Board of Directors of the Lutheran Human Relations Association of America, meeting at Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, October 1, adopted a statement on the "kneel-in" movement now taking place in various parts of the United States.

Although "kneel-ins" at present are not as widespread as other joint activities designed to combat and overcome racial discrimination in this country, they are of significant importance; they are directed at our churches which have the greatest moral and ethical potential to remove discrimination and its source — sinful and unwarranted prejudice. The Statement on Kneel-ins follows.

"We acknowledge and confess that the Church, with its houses of worship, its free Gospel of forgiveness and love, its Sacraments, and its fellowship are the possession of Jesus Christ, its Head.

"We believe it to be the right of all men to become members of that

Church, to enter its houses of worship, partake of its Gospel and Sacraments, and freely to join in its fellowship.

"We further believe that, when Negroes in the past have come to such houses of worship where white Christians were assembled, they were not only exercising their God-given prerogative but also presenting to the Church an opportunity to express the oneness of all men in Adam and the unity of all men through Jesus Christ.

"We believe that the present kneel-in demonstrations are an extension of the endeavor on the part of Negroes in the past to demonstrate their belief in the unity of the human family, and, in the case of Christians, of the unity of all believers in Jesus Christ.

"While we acknowledge that the motives of people as they come to worship are not always consistently in keeping with the will of God, but may at times be sinful, we believe that it is not within the prerogative of the members of a Christian congregation to judge such people as to their motives.

"We condemn as loveless the practice of Christian people of withholding from Negroes or other non-whites their prerogative according to the

(Continued on page four)

A LOOK AROUND

By Martin H. Scharlemann

1. A Revealing Item

All the words were in place. The prayers had been chosen from an approved book. The opening devotions had followed the accepted order and pattern. The wildest witch-hunter didn't have a chance in such an antiseptic atmosphere. It was a fiscal meeting. Projected needs and budgets were under discussion. And there it was: "Negro Missions."

A district official, with long years of battle for integration behind him, rose to ask, "What is a Negro mission?" The inflection in his voice and the stress in the question at once made it clear that, probably quite inadvertently, the use of this wording revealed to what extent the mission of the church had not yet been fully understood. Happily, the assembly soon saw the point. Another blow had been struck for a better understanding of what the work of the church must be, if it is to be the church at all. Whether this point has got across more generally remains to be seen.

2. Of Modern Africa

William Mulvihill teaches history in a Long Island high school. In his spare time he writes. His craftsmanship won him the first \$10,000 Pulitzer Award; and his book hit the market just as the newspapers were black with headlines from Africa. No volume was ever timed more properly. For *The Sands of Kalahari* (Putnam's, \$3.95) deals with the shame of the white man in Africa, his exploitation of its people and its great treasures. Young Mulvihill displays great imagination in the development of a story that begins with an airplane crash in the very heart of the Kalahari desert, a wasteland larger in area than Texas.

There are six survivors of the wreck, five men, and an English divorcee who had been born in Africa. The group saves itself by making its way



LHRAA Board of Directors in session. Left to right: Mr. Richard K. Fox, Jr., Minneapolis, Director; Mr. Carl F. Galow, Jr. Valparaiso University, Press Secretary of LHRAA; Dr. Virgil O. Naumann, Tulsa, Okla., Treasurer; the Rev. Joseph W. Ellwanger, Birmingham, Ala., Director; Dr. Andrew Schulze, Executive Secretary; the Rev. Karl E. Lutze, Field Secretary; Mrs. Andrew Schulze, office secretary; the Rev. Clemonce Sabourin, New York City, President; Mrs. John A. Heidengren, Cleveland, Secretary. Absent when picture was taken: Dr. Thomas Coates and Mr. Paul Simon.

to an outcropping of rock, where they find a small pool of water, which, however, they are obliged to share with baboons and lizards. Under these circumstances, the taboos of civilization are forgotten; and each of the survivors feels free to bare his soul to the others. Each one manifests a strong attachment to Africa and shares a feeling of guilt over what the white man has done in a land that did not really belong to him.

The pilot, Sturdevant, is troubled by the memory of the many times he transported new black slaves for the diamond mines. He admits that, when he is in his plane, looking down on the face of Africa, he "feels like a vulture coming in to feed." Grimmelmann, an old German warrior, cannot forget his part in the massacre of the spear-carrying Hereros, whose crime was that they were black and owned fine, fat cattle which the white man wanted.

Mike Bain is a former Seabee, quite disgusted with the life of liquored Nirvana. He was on his way to lose himself in the Dark Continent. O'Brien, the wealthy hunter, has been driven to Africa by an inexplicable pull that he cannot understand. Even Jefferson Smith, the educated American Negro, is out on his own, just dimly aware that he is needed by the people with whom he shares his ancestry.

But it is Mrs. Grace Moncton who gives utterance to the cliché often used by white men in discussing the sins of their fathers, who created the basis for the present racial struggle in the world. "We are wrong," she admits. "But what can we do about it?"

Well, it may just be that there is not much that can be done any more. The hour is quite late — also for the church! The hands of the clock have got around to about the same place where they were when God raised Assyria of old to be a scourge for His people. Reading a book such as that of Mulvihill helps us to understand what the clock of history is saying. One feels a sense of great tragedy and an awareness of how much there is to repent of.

Aristotle used to say that the experience of tragic feeling served to purge the emotions. Our Lord indicated that repentance is the way to renewal. It is just possible that, out of our present frustrations and sorrows for opportunities missed, God Himself will arrange to raise up a purified and

cleansed people of God, more determined than before to create unity where before there was separation, more intent on expending itself than boasting of its accomplishments, less concerned with public relations than with the ministry of healing.

Hotel Theresa -- Harlem

Who knew of the place before Fidel Castro moved into it with his entourage and when Nikita Khrushchev went there to visit Mr. Castro? Many Negroes in Harlem, and one or two more outside its confines.

It was in the summer of 1944 that the General Conference convened in Philadelphia. After the Conference adjourned, a number of us Midwesterners decided for two reasons to drive to New York City. One was to see Paul Robeson in *Othello*, then being played on Broadway; the other, to accompany the Rev. Clemonce Sabourin to the city of his new pastoral responsibility.

There is no doubt that Christian churches were greatly needed in Harlem at that time, as they are today still. Lutheran churches, too.

Looking back over the sixteen years that have now intervened, one is compelled to say that it was an honor to have accompanied the young Lutheran preacher to his new charge in the big city, to have helped him and his family bring their baggage into the Hotel Theresa lobby, to have exchanged a few more friendly words, and to have wished him and his family the abundant blessing of God for their future work.

It was an honor? Yes, for this young Negro pastor was moving into the most overcrowded area of the already overcrowded New York City to build the church of Jesus Christ. He began from scratch. In less than two years he built a self-sustaining congregation and within three years a private Christian day school (self-supporting, too); and from the beginning he carried out a program of activities for that overcrowded community to serve people in keeping with their total need.

Harlem is a tough place for any man or woman to work in the church or outside of it. The chief ingredient going into making it tough is no doubt the obvious one, that there are perhaps five family units in space that can adequately take care of only one.

Negroes are crowded into Harlem, not "because they want to be with their own kind," but primarily because housing in New York City — like housing in the lesser metropolises of our nation — is not on the open market to be purchased or rented by any family that can afford it. Our Negro citizens especially suffer because of restrictions placed upon them by conniving real estate dealers.

When Fidel Castro, therefore, moved into the Hotel Theresa in Harlem and when Nikita Khrushchev with all his passion for propaganda went there to visit his new-found friend, we, the people of the United States, gave him what he was looking for: proof positive that we are not, in our day-by-day treatment of people, as democratic as we would like to have other people think we are.

Did Mr. Khrushchev lose a propaganda battle when appearing before the United Nations? He surely won one when he went to Harlem. Another good reason to pray more fervently, "Thy Kingdom Come," and when doing so remember not only Pastor Sabourin in his cross-bearing Kingdom activity but all of those "good and self-respecting" citizens who are participants directly or indirectly in crowding people into Harlems on Manhattan Island and elsewhere in our land.

Anachronisms

In August of this year the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America resolved to close its Immanuel College in Greensboro, N.C., and to rebuild Alabama Lutheran Academy and College at Selma on a new plot of ground. Both institutions have been maintained as schools of higher learning for Negroes.

Shortly before the Synodical Conference Convention, Dr. Louis P. Lochner, world traveler, Christian journalist, author, and Pulitzer prize winner, wrote the editor of **The VANGUARD**: "Both institutions are definitely anachronisms. Their existence as segregated institutions is in conflict with the race resolutions of our Synod, is calculated to interfere with our missionary work at home and abroad, and, if continued, will indict Lutheranism in America as reactionary when compared with the civil rights platforms of both American political parties."

EAST GERMANY AND THE SOUTH

A more descriptive title would probably be: East German and Southern Christians.

What is now called East Germany was traditionally Protestant, either "Evangelisch" or "Lutherisch."

Dr. Oswald C. J. Hoffmann, Lutheran Hour speaker and head of the Department of Public Relations of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, recently wrote the clergy of that Synod as follows:

"Work is just being completed on our new film describing the routine but tense struggle between Christianity and Communism in East Germany. It gave me the opportunity in recent months to talk to many people who know personally what it means to be a Christian under the pressures of militant secularism and atheism, supported by the force of the whole state apparatus.

"For the first time in many years, the reported total of Lutheran people in the world went down instead of up. In the Soviet Zone of Germany, the Lutheran Church of Saxony, to which our own Synod owes a great deal historically, lost over 613,000 members last year. This very likely means that about one-sixth of the church's membership 'stepped out' of the church, with official notification to that effect. During the last decade these people found it popular to belong. Now it has become popular not to belong.

"Lutherans in East Germany, with whom I had opportunity to talk, do not regard these developments as altogether unhealthy. Those who stand up and confess their faith are more sturdy and stalwart than before. Many have had to search their own souls, taking renewed hold on the assurances of God's Word. They include young people who often have to sacrifice the most to remain true to Christ, giving up opportunities for education and employment in the process. These youngsters understand the statement of St. Paul to young Timothy: 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.' 2 Tim. 3:12."

When reading the letter quoted above, the question arose: What about Christians in our Southland? There the most inhumane restrictions are placed on a very large segment of the population — on the millions of Ne-

groes residing there. State and local governments have been consistently defying the Federal Government and the Supreme Court ever since 1955; they are doing it by circumvention or by overt act. These restrictions kill initiative, stifle a full and free personality development, and make Negroes throughout the South live under the constant danger of the loss of employment, of property, and even of life itself.

In East Germany, the 613,000 "Lutherans" by their membership in the church at least silently protested the ungodly and inhumane purposes of the Communistic regime. But when, as Dr. Hoffmann wrote, it became popular, they went the easy way, forsook the church and thus identified themselves with the ideology of atheism and communistic oppression.

It's worse in the South. There the churches themselves have for decades given comfort and support to ungodly racial discrimination; and even now, when the Federal Government, though belatedly, is trying to remove those un-American, discriminatory practices, the churches are still largely silent, and in those isolated instances, when individual ministers speak out against the rampant inhumanity, members of those churches, with few exceptions, clamp down on their minister, gag him, or throw him out of the church. They find it more convenient to go along with the local and state governments, even in opposition to the plans of the Federal Government.

But more wicked than the East Germans, these Southern Christians support ungodliness from within the safe walls of the Christian church. They want to be the Church and yet continue to oppose and reject those whom Christ wants in His Church.

What would they do if the chips were down? The Episcopal Bishop of Little Rock wrote of the people of his diocese that they were Southerners first — and then Episcopalians.

The real Church in the world is always, of course, the Church under the cross, suffering as it witnesses for Christ in any situation and at any given time. "Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Eph. 5:1-2.

Payola in the Church?

Another of the many new terms of the electronic age is this synonym for bribery: payola.

The term has almost fallen into disuse since it has no longer been on the front page of every newsheet.

But a quick glance at a practice in churches today might be in place before we shelve the term altogether. There are still all too many instances when people who have glowing records of generous gifts to the church are heard to say words to this effect: "If they start inviting Negroes to this church, I'll take my membership and financial support elsewhere."

While the prospects of waning membership and faltering financial strength may indeed be frightening, a church had better realize that, if it should submit to such pressures, it thereby agrees to accept money on the condition that it will set aside the Great Commission of our Lord; it refuses to "preach the Gospel to every creature!"

Is not this the very worst kind of payola?

— K. E. L.

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KNEEL-INS

(Continued from page one)

will of God to be identified with the Christian community in public worship, to use the Sacraments, to enjoy the fellowship of the Church, and thus to confess their need for both the mercy of God and membership in the body of Christ.

"As we confess our guilt in the Church's corporate sin expressed in exclusiveness, racial pride, and silence in the face of injustices — sins that have mounted in the church over the years, creating an atmosphere of coldness and hostility and necessitating such movements as the current "kneel-ins" — we call upon all our fellow Christians to join us in this our confession of guilt and expression of repentance, trusting that, in Christ, God will have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and give us His Spirit more fully to combat and overcome them.

"We commend such congregations of white constituency who, in the face of the reaction of an unfriendly cultural pattern and perhaps under the threat of loss of prestige and personal acceptance, and the possibility of physical harm and property loss, open the doors of their churches and bear witness to Christ by accepting freely and without reservation people of other racial or ethnic identity into their fellowship.

"We encourage our Negro neighbors and Negro fellow Christians to render a needed service to our country and the church by worshiping with their white neighbors and fellow Christians, so that the ignominy which has come upon us by our divisiveness may be removed, our country regain its good name as a freedom-loving people, and, above all, the name of Jesus Christ be not blasphemed among the nations."

UNWANTED VISITORS?

From time to time one hears of Negroes attending services of churches in what might be called altogether Caucasian neighborhoods. Often it is feared — and sometimes it has been admitted — that the visitors merely wanted to see how they would be received.

Pastors and laymen alike have been heard to denounce this sort of action as dishonest and at best unworthy of one who comes to the Lord's house. Some of these have declared emphatically, "I don't want that kind of worshiper in my church."

We suppose this is only a small part of a long parade of people who have made their way to a church with less than worthy motives. For example, a boy who attends church where his girl friend holds membership; or the merchant or political candidate who wants to be known as an honest churchgoer; or the public school teacher who desires to show interest in and respect for the role of the church in the school's community. And people generally welcome such visitors.

Are there not times, in fact, when we not only accept but actually try to attract such worshipers-with-secondary-motives? Do we hope a local musician will attend a particular service because the choir will sing a composition by Praetorius? Or do we hope the local art teacher or librarian will be present when we dedicate our new stained glass windows? Or do we word our sermon topics in the newspaper announcements in such a way that some will be lured into coming to hear just what the church has to say on some subject of vital concern?

Whatever a visitor's reason for attending, a congregation really has reason to welcome the opportunity to let its light shine, that others might be led to see and seize the Savior's love.

— K.E.L.

Two Answers

"If we permit members of 'that group' to come to our church, some members of our church might leave."

Answer 1. We don't really know whether they will, but if this church ever closes its doors to the person who comes here to find the forgiving Jesus, I would certainly want to leave. I think Christ would, too.

Answer 2. It is possible that some may leave. Maybe. But there are no maybes or doubts that we **will** be keeping **out** some whom Jesus wants, and for whom He has died, if we determine not to invite them.

Both these answers were given by Southerners in public meetings. A Northerner (from the Northern Kingdom, later called Galilee) who loved all people of all groups answered it this way: "Blessed is he who shall not be offended in Me." — K.E.L.

Doubter to Doubter

Whether friend or foe, he wrote **The VANGUARD** anonymously as follows: "Sirs: A number of us were shocked when told that Rev. Andrew Schulze, the very passionate proponent of racial equality, had allegedly denied his daughter his consent to marry a Negro. A statement of denial in **The VANGUARD** would be most reassuring to those who now question the sincerity of Rev. Schulze's agitations. Very truly, A Doubter."

Editor's response: I doubt whether I could have denied my daughter my "consent to marry a Negro." She isn't born as yet.

For a fuller analysis of the deep, dark subject, our anonymous friend is advised to write us — with one dollar enclosed — and we shall send him an answer from theology, biology, and sociology to the question of **INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE?** — 72 pages worth.

LUTHERAN HUMAN RELATIONS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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