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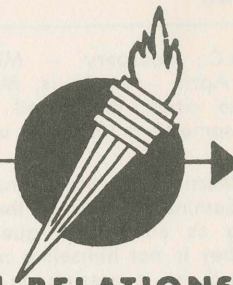
The Vanguard (Vol. 9, No. 4), Apr 1962

Lutheran Human Relations Association of America

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THE VANGUARD



... THE CHURCH IN HUMAN RELATIONS

Volume 9, Number 4

April, 1962

That the Church May Lead

'THE WITNESS' — A WITNESS

The Lutheran Witness, a publication of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, is among the largest denominational publications in our land. Every second week a new issue finds its way into hundreds of thousands of Lutheran homes. The paper has a great potential for influencing lives, for helping Christian people to find Christian answers for perplexing problems that confront them in our fast changing society.

Now that another triennial convention of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is in the offing, it may be remembered by a number of our readers that immediately preceding the 1959 convention of the synod, **The VANGUARD** published an article which charged that **The Lutheran Witness** was not fulfilling its role as a witness to Lutheran theology in as far as race relations is concerned. In 1956 the synod adopted some fairly good race relations resolutions, but the **Witness** had not seen fit to take advantage of the adoption of those resolutions by trying vigorously to have them implemented in the life of the church. And until recently, the **Witness**, editorial-wise—and with it the entire church represented by the **Witness**—by silence gave consent to many of the unchristian practices in the area of race relations in our land and especially also in the church.

It is a cause for deep gratitude that **The Lutheran Witness** now seems to have ventured out upon a significantly new policy. It now seems committed to addressing itself forthrightly to the challenge of the race issue, than which there are few or very few areas in which the Christian witness is more urgently needed in our time.

It all happened last year. In the November 14 issue, an editorial—obviously in response to someone who objected even to the mild-mannered approach that the editorial policy had permitted until then—under the caption, "Please Cancel," began with these words: "If it revolts you to see whites

and Negroes pictured together, you'll just have to send in your cancellation notice as you say, sir. For there will be more pictures of whites and Negroes. It's unavoidable. It's life. What's more, the **Witness** will not be bought off, intimidated, or cajoled. Nor will it duck its head when tough issues call for clear and forthright witness to the truth."

Upon reading the editorial, this writer was both gratified and humbled. He was gratified to know that the **Witness** now intended to speak out on the race issue as the exigencies of our times demand. He was humbled because the warped opinion which the editorial "Please Cancel" was combatting was the expression of one who had been reading the **Witness** and who possibly had been led, by the editorial silence of that paper, to believe that his segregationist, racist viewpoint was not contrary to a true Lutheran witness.

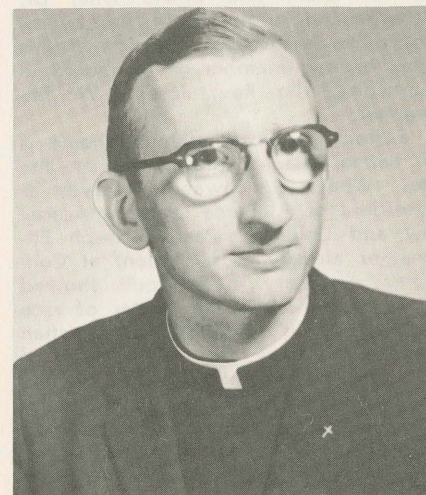
The Lutheran Witness had no alternative. If its traditional policy was in error — and as such confirmed others in their erroneous racial attitudes — it could in all honesty do nothing else but change its policy — right now! But in doing so, Christian humility dictated something that did not appear in the article that marked a radical departure from the past; there was no expression of repentance and no call for repentance on the part of the church whose mouthpiece the **Witness** had been when the editorial policy was less than forthright and, as such, less than that which the paper's name calls for — Lutheran witness. A humble confession of our corporate sin of the past, coupled with an avowed determination to witness to the truth, is a combination of two ingredients that are in keeping with the daily life of a baptized Christian who confesses with Luther (as well as St. Paul, Romans 6), "The old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts

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Ode to LHRAA Board of Directors

Much time and effort is devoted to the cause of LHRAA by the members of its board of directors. Besides attending to the work of their specific callings, they are active in the support of the cause of the association, on a local level through individual chapters of LHRAA, and on a national level, as members of the board. Many of our readers know how difficult it can be at times — because of the unholy alliance of hostility and apathy — to implement LHRAA programs locally. (Then, too, the concerned person, always active in many church and some civic projects, finds himself hard put to find time to devote to LHRAA activities.) Membership on the board of directors of LHRAA involves taking its members out of their crowded schedule to travel over the week-end to the place where the board meeting is held and to participate in the busy schedule arranged for them so that full advantage is taken of their presence and of their knowledge while at the place of meeting.

The board of directors met during the LHRAA fiscal year, which began July 1, in the following places: July — Valparaiso, Indiana; September — Cincinnati, Ohio; December — Washing-



The Rev. J. W. Ellwanger

ton, D.C.; February — Minneapolis, Minn.; April — St. Louis, Mo. While in these cities, the board meets all day — sometimes including an evening session.

Dr. Martin H. Scharlemann of Concordia Seminary, attended the St. Louis meeting as an invited guest. Since this writer is not himself a member of the board, he is passing on to our interested friends the note Dr. Scharlemann wrote after he had attended the meeting: "Enjoyed sitting in with the board on Saturday. It is an education just to listen to the many problems that confront the board, and I'm constantly amazed by the wealth of ideas that are presented."

On the day after the Saturday meetings, board members occupy pulpits or lead Bible classes, or both, always helping the local congregations to see more fully the implications of our Christian faith and calling in the great race issue now confronting all of us.

The afternoon and evening of that Sunday is devoted to a local institute on human relations, at which the board members lecture or participate in panel discussions, or both. Usually they fly or drive back to their homes that same evening to be ready the next day for work in the classroom, as Christian pastors in their parishes, or in their office where they are employed.

The board of directors is at present comprised of the following persons: The Rev. Clemonce Sabourin, New York City, president; Dr. Thomas Coates, Fort Wayne, Ind., vice-president; Miss Lois Dorow, St. Louis, secretary; Dr. Virgil O. Naumann, Tulsa, Okla., treasurer; and board members: The Rev. Joseph W. Ellwanger, Birmingham, Ala., Mr. Richard K. Fox, Jr., Washington, D.C., and Mr. Galen Gockel, Chicago.

There are several reasons for calling the attention of **VANGUARD** readers to the LHRAA board of directors and their activities at this time. One is to tell them and others what Dr. Scharlemann wrote about the board; the other is to focus attention at this time on one member of the board in particular, the Rev. Joseph W. Ellwanger.

Pastor Ellwanger's parental home is in Selma, Ala., where his father, the Rev. Walter H. Ellwanger, serves as president of Alabama Lutheran Academy and College. Pastor Joseph Ellwanger already as a student at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis showed a keen interest in the matter of race relations as it confronts the Christian conscience in our day. As a result of this early interest, he chose as the subject of his Bachelor of Divinity thesis: "Integration and the Lutheran Church in the South." In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Sacred Theology degree—granted him one year after his gradu-

ation — he wrote a thesis on "Racism and the Christian World Mission."

The Rev. Ellwanger, upon completion of his graduate studies, accepted the call to become the pastor of St. Paul Church in Birmingham, Alabama. His congregation, predominantly Negro in membership, is in one of Birmingham's large Negro communities.

The young man of God — he is twenty-nine years old — has no doubt learned by personal experience what St. Paul meant when he wrote (Phil. 1:29): "For 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 . . ."

If time and space permitted, many things that Pastor Ellwanger did and many things that happened to him because of his unequivocal adherence to and expressions of his Christian convictions in the matter of Christian race relations could be cited as proof that he in his youth has already merited the high praise expressed by St. Paul in the words quoted above.

His acceptance of his call; his living in the community of his parishioners (he is white, and most of his members are Negroes); his identifying himself with his people and their community, recognizing their total need; his participating in programs intended to help bring justice and equity to all people of Birmingham, where viciousness and brutality toward Negroes are a stench in the nostrils of God; his part in arranging and participating in an interracial meeting which led hatemongers to burn a cross and to beat a seminarian who participated; his receiving many threatening phone calls and letters; his work with officials of the Southern District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, pleading the urgency of the application of the hymn: "Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross," urging the officials and the church to settle for nothing less, right now, than the complete acceptance of our Negro citizens as full-fledged brothers in Adam and our Negro fellow Christians as first-class citizens of the kingdom of heaven, "with all the rights and privileges thereunto appertaining — all this is but a sketchy outline of the courageous Christian witness of Joseph Ellwanger.

It may take the church a long time to recognize in this young man of God "any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy" (Phil. 2:1). His courage, though, and his self-sacrificing love have been recognized by people of good will residing in Birmingham, a metropolitan city of brutality.

The occasion was a three-day Southern Regional Conference of Frontiers International, a twenty-five-year-old nation-wide service organization. Pas-

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ON OTHER LUTHERAN FRONTS

By L. W. Halvorson
Concern Continues

On April 1, 1947, the National Lutheran Council welcomed a new department in its Division of American Missions known as "The Christian Approach to the Jewish People." On March 31, 1962, this same department came to a close. For fifteen years there has been this special emphasis upon the responsibility of the church to evangelize among the Jews as well as among the Gentiles. What is the reason for discontinuing this special emphasis?

The first executive secretary of the department, the Reverend Harold Floreen, used to say, "We are trying to work ourselves out of a job." This meant very simply that once the church reached the point where it no longer needed prodding or help in seeking for the Jewish people, then the department would no longer be necessary. It would be a bit presumptuous to say that the church has actually reached that point. But in the action that closed the Department for the Christian Approach to the Jewish People there is assurance that concern for the Jew will continue even though the department is closed.

Here is the action referred to: "VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: That, in the confidence that the participating bodies of the National Lutheran Council will use every means at their disposal to lay the responsibility for bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to Jewish people upon the consciences of the individual congregations of the churches, thus witnessing to these people as they do to all others within their respective communities, the National Lutheran Council amend the By-Laws by striking the section on The Christian Approach to the Jewish People under Article IX, Section 2, thus terminating the work of the Department of The Christian Approach to the Jewish People as of March 31, 1962."

These words of confidence in the "means" at the disposal of the church bodies and also in the conscience of the individual congregations, place a distinct emphasis on the "parish approach" in reaching out to the Jewish people. This has been the "approach" promoted by the Department for The Christian Approach to the Jewish People, and now this concern will continue.

The church needs more than ever before an awakening of the mission

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CARL ROWAN

The March issue of **The VANGUARD** told the story of how Mr. Carl Rowan's application for membership in the Cosmos Club of Washington, D.C., was rejected. The picture of Mr. Rowan, which **The VANGUARD** had requested from the **Chicago-Sun Times**, arrived too late for inclusion in that issue, so that of



Dr. O. P. Kretzmann, president of Valparaiso University, was substituted. Not because it necessarily portrayed a more photogenic personality, nor merely to fill up space, but because of the relevant humorous comment of President Kretzmann with reference to the activity of his brother in trying to secure the acceptance of Mr. Rowan into the Cosmos Club. The picture of Mr. Carl Rowan is by courtesy of the **Chicago-Sun Times**.

"QUOTES"

Bedfellows—Not Too Strange

A **VANGUARD** correspondent wrote: "Some time ago we went to hear General Walker with some of our friends. After his meeting, a young fellow took off his coat and revealed a complete Storm Trooper uniform. He passed out literature that is enclosed . . . The most interesting thing is the editorial endorsing Elijah Mohammed. Hate is apparently such a strong force that it can unite such diverse people (followers of James Walker, members of the American Nazi Party, and followers of the Black Muslim movement). As Eric Hoffer says, "Hate can give purpose and meaning to an otherwise dull and empty life."

OTHER LUTHERAN FRONTS

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spirit — for Jews and Gentiles alike. It is strange how many there are who profess to be Christians and yet have little concern for the salvation of others. It is within the congregation that this concern must be revitalized so that individual members will bear their Christian witness to all people and in all places.

My appeal would be to all friends of the Lutheran Human Relations Association of America, that we make very special efforts to strengthen our mission programs in congregations. This is the front line of the warfare of the Christian soldier. It is here that we are either faithful or unfaithful as servants of Jesus Christ.

A LOOK AROUND

By Martin H. Scharlemann

1. "Thinking Black"

Mr. Dan Crawford was a pioneer missionary to the central Congo. He wrote a book entitled, **Thinking Black**, which was intended to be something of an autobiography. A Scottish missionary in Nyasaland read this volume some few years ago and observed, "I have been in Africa 40 years and still can't 'think black.'" Can a white man ever do so?

How difficult this matter is can be illustrated by a recent document that came to our attention. It proposed to be a blue-print for expanding church activity and interest among American Negroes. Put just that way, the wording of the title will tend to defeat the whole project. For like the Irish-American, the German-American, the Negro wants to be an **American**. To refer to him as "the American Negro," rather than "the Negro American" is to perpetuate the ideology of white superiority.

The document in question is well-intentioned. In fact, by implication it is a repudiation of previous indifference. Yet it fails to "think black"; and so the first skirmish is already lost. Expert advice was available; yet no consultation took place. This is most unfortunate. One is reminded of the old saying, "For want of a nail, the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe, the horse was lost; for want of a horse, the rider was lost; and for want of the rider, the battle was lost."

2. African Problems

The February 1962 issue of **Lutheran World** is devoted to matters that will be taken up in Helsinki next year by the Lutheran World Federation Assembly under the general theme, "Christ Today." This particular issue of said journal takes up the problem of missionary identification. One article points out that to this very day the most common words in the vocabulary of the African are the words

"mission" and "missionary" and not "church" or "pastor." It is obvious, says the writer, that the foreign mission and the indigenous church are not one and the same thing, and neither are the foreign missionary and the African pastor one and the same thing.

"The average African mind, Christian and non-Christian, has been conditioned for decades by the impact of the foreign mission and foreign missionary. That impact must be supplanted without delay by the impact of the African church and the African pastor . . . Even Europeans who are members of churches in Africa are slow to recognize that the African Christian is a member of his own indigenous church and not a member of a foreign mission." So goes one paragraph of the article, underlining the revolutionary changes going on in the field of church work among Africans.

3. A Dowager and a Cane

During last year's kneel-ins at Nashville, Tenn., one lone Negro student went to a fashionable down-town church to test the brotherly love of old-line parishioners. An usher met the young guest at the door and ushered him out again. As the student was leaving, the pastor hurried out to the steps to welcome him, take his arm and lead him to a seat in the center of the church. As the auditorium filled up with people, the Negro's pew remained unoccupied except for himself. Soon a formidable dowager made her stately way down the aisle, leaning on a gold-headed cane. She stopped at the nearly-empty pew, regarded the Negro sternly, raised her stick and brandished it in the air in the hushed view of the congregation and the frightened student.

"Move over! Move over!" she admonished in a commanding tone, waving her cane. "You can't worship alone." The young man hastily slid over, the old lady sat beside him and

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nearly congregation members moved to fill up the pew.

After church the guest talked with the pastor in his study. The minister wondered what the young Negro proposed to do with his life. "You know," the boy answered with a new gleam in his eye, "I think I'd like to be pastor of this church."

THE WITNESS

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and again a new man daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever."

Perhaps a generalization will be permitted at this juncture. A disturbing phenomenon which the more liberal elements in our society no doubt find among us conservatives is a tendency always to protect our past, our past theology as well as our past performance. But though this observation has been called a generalization, a documentation of it with devastating facts would not require the services of a corps of research specialists; it could be secured by any intelligent person dedicated to the truth.

It is to be hoped that **The Lutheran Witness** will do both, where necessary: call our attention to our sins of the past so that we might be called to repentance, and chart a new course for us so that the church at long last — at least so far as the readers of the **Witness** are concerned — will be compelled to heed the exhortation of Micah (6:8), "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

A sequel to this article is found in the following.

The Witness and Interracial Marriage

Continuing what appears to be a new editorial policy, **The Lutheran Witness** in its February 20 issue published an article entitled, "Interracial Marriage." In doing so the paper didn't wait long before lighting the fuse of an emotional powder keg. But it is good that this subject was treated soon after the "forthright" editorial

policy was adopted. The truth can stand the light.

Those who oppose the granting of equal opportunity in the church and elsewhere without racial restrictions will somehow find a way to bring the matter of interracial marriage into almost any discussion of race relations. An honest, objective article on interracial marriage, if it causes an explosion, will, if anything, explode the stereotype expressed in the gimmick question: "Would you want your daughter to . . ." The prejudiced questioner may not give up his prejudice, but the honest seeker after truth will find an intelligent answer to combat the stereotype when he is confronted with it the next time.

The Lutheran Witness must be commended for having published an article on interracial marriage. And the article itself has much that is worthy of commendation. In the first place, it presented the social difficulties often confronting those who marry across racial lines, and difficulties which because of a traditionally unfavorable social atmosphere can confront not only the couple but others too, especially their offspring.

Another relevant truth brought out by the **Witness** article is the fact that "the number of interracial marriages 'is an inconsequential dribble in the annual stream of American wedlock . . . a microscopic percentage of the total.'"

There are two specific difficulties though that this writer found in the "Interracial Marriage" article. Contrary to fact, the author of the article seems to give the reader the impression that, when writing of the social difficulties that may in some instances be involved in an interracial marriage, there is a large number of "advocates" of intermarriage; and for that reason too people must be warned. But in all his reading on the subject of race relations, this writer has found that the percentage of those who advocate interracial marriage is at least as small as the percentage of interracial marriages themselves.

The second weakness of the article is found in an omission which can counter the good aspects of the article.

The author — though it must be assumed that he could not say everything that should be said in a short article of three pages — would have served his readers well had he explained how the question, "Would you want your daughter to . . ." is used. It is normally used not only to win the argument before it is discussed objectively, but it plays upon the fears of many people engendered by a social climate that is unfavorable to interracial marriage, and in doing so works toward justifying those discriminations which would withhold from Negroes their rights as free citizens in a free society. And, more importantly, the argument against interracial marriage is used to withhold the full fellowship of the Christian congregation, upon the basis of racial identity, from some people for whom it is intended by the Head of the Church.

But **The VANGUARD** now holds the hope that, following a new policy in its approach to the burning race issue, **The Lutheran Witness** will serve the church well, in presenting the problems and the opportunities involved and in helping Christian people to find Christian answers.

ODE

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for Ellwanger received an "Outstanding Citizen" citation honoring him because of the courageous leadership that he is giving to the Birmingham area and also to the South in general.

The disrepute into which the church has come because of its apathy with regard to the needs of the total man in our fast changing society will, under God, be overcome only if and when people like Joseph Ellwanger will more and more identify themselves with people in their total need, thus accepting the directive of the prophet, "Open thy mouth for the dumb and for all such as are appointed unto destruction; open thy mouth, judge righteously and plead the cause of the poor and needy."

The kingdom of God in this world is a kingdom under the cross. But the cross leads to glorious victory in Christ.

LUTHERAN HUMAN RELATIONS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana

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Editorial Office: Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Professor Martin H. Scharlemann