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The Cresset

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE,

THE ARTS, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

TWENTY CENTS

Vol. XXX, No. 2

DECEMBER, 1966
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THE CRESSET is published monthly September through June by the Valparaiso University Press, Valparaiso, Indiana. 46383, as a forum for scholarly writing and informed opinion. The views expressed herein are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the preponderance of opinion at Valparaiso University or within the editorial board. Second class postage paid at Valparaiso, Indiana. Subscription rates: One year — $2.00; two years — $3.75; three years — $5.50. Single copy 20 cents. Entire contents copyrighted 1966 by the Valparaiso University Press, without whose written permission reproduction in whole or in part and for any purpose whatsoever is expressly forbidden.
Cry the Unloved Country

We are a people that has grown weary of slogans, especially those which issue from the lips of politicians. On the whole, this weariness is more than justified, for more often than not the slogan has been nothing more than a partisan war-cry set to the melody of some universal appeal to the human heart. But occasionally we are offered a slogan which, whatever its motivation, stirs us not so much to cynicism as to pain — the pain which the heart feels when it has been given the glimpse of a vision which reason and experience tell us can not be anything more than a vision. Thus it was with the New Deal. Thus it is with the Great Society.

To know America at all is to know a dream that has never come true, possibilities that have never materialized, an experiment that seems always to be on the verge of failure. It is to weep for a pristine beauty that has been defiled, for a community which we possessed the institutions but not the will to achieve, for all of the bright hopes of a new beginning which we were unwilling to risk because we were afraid of what it might cost us. We came here tired and poor, faces in those huddled masses that thought that their deepest longing was to be free. We remained to recreate, in this new land, the conditions from which we had sought to escape. We imposed upon each other the tyrannies under which we had groaned. And we learned, in a very short time, that it wasn't really freedom that we had wanted at all, but irresponsibility.

The evidence of all this lies spread out beneath the angry eye of heaven. It is there in our raped and littered landscape; in the urban jungles where racial and ethnic groups cower in their ghettos like animals in cages and where women are afraid to walk in our parks in broad daylight; in highway signs urging us to impeach a Chief Justice who defines as law what all of us profess to believe; in lakes and rivers which have become the catchment basins for fifty million flush toilets; on commuter trains where men who have accumulated the symbols of success try to drown in a succession of martinis the numbing boredom of the trip from the putrefying city to the threatened suburb.

This is beginning to sound too much like a jeremiad. But perhaps we need a Jeremiah to come among us and to tell us that we can not hope to create anything like a Great Society unless we can first learn to love. If such a prophet were to rise up among us, surely the first thing he would tell us is that we must learn to distinguish love from its many counterfeits — from sentimentality, from every loyalty that is based upon the principle of exclusion, from the phony patriotism that is content to discharge the duties of citizenship by flying the flag. He would tell us that we must love the land and the waters, the lakeshores and the forests, the air and the sunlight which are the flesh and bones, the muscles and sinews and arteries of America. He would remind us of those heady truths which we still claim to be self evident, which we tried to safeguard by writing them into the Constitution as a Bill of Rights, and which we all profess to recognize as the spirit of America. He would denounce the fears and greeds and suspicions which wall us off from each other and which breed, out of ignorance, those hatreds which sour and shrivel the heart of America.

And if we listened to him, we might learn what we have not yet learned, to love our country as a reality of land and people, rather than some vague and ultimately meaningless abstraction. Then we might hope to build here that Great Society which is, at the moment, nothing more than a slogan which serves chiefly to remind us of our failures in the past. No nation in history has been given so much of what it takes to make that vision a reality. It would be tragic if history had to write against the record of our generation: "They failed because they could not love."

Necessary Restraints

A prestigious ten-member advisory committee on fair trial and free press has reported to the American Bar Association its recommendations for procedures which would minimize the dangers of trial by public opinion.
Predictably, a large segment of the press has reacted to these recommendations with sonorous warnings of a grave menace to freedom of the press and of the danger that the adoption of these recommendations could invite "secret law enforcement" resulting in "a partially and improperly informed public at the time of serious crime."

We would not be in the business we are in if we did not believe in the social value of a free press. But we would find it very difficult to argue that this freedom has no limits. The bare words of the First Amendment could be read as a flat statement that there are no limits at all. But such an interpretation does not commend itself to any reasonable man, even if he happens to be an editor. Given the facts that the Constitution suggests that certain rights are absolute and that these rights can, on occasion, come into irreconcilable conflict with each other, it is obviously necessary that we arrange them in some sort of hierarchy of importance. Where a particular right should stand in this hierarchy is a question on which reasonable men can disagree, but the spirit of our institutions would seem to suggest that ordinarily the rights of the individual need to be more carefully safeguarded than the rights of any group or collective. Stated in terms of the present controversy, the law ought to be more concerned with the lonely, frightened, rejected individual who stands in jeopardy of his life or freedom than with the rights of any industry, even if that industry happens to enjoy the peculiar privileges and immunities which the press does enjoy under the Bill of Rights.

Actually, the A.B.A. committee has not recommended any limitations on the freedom of the press. Its recommendations deal rather with the release of information by "servants of the court" - police, prosecutors, defense lawyers, and court employees. Most of the limitations which the committee proposes to impose upon the release of information by these people are already in force in almost all Western countries, including Great Britain, whose popular press is so preoccupied with lurid crime news that even our most sensational newspapers seem, by comparison, models of restraint. Briefly summarized, these restrictions would apply to such information as would be "potentially prejudicial" to a suspect if he were indicted and brought to trial. But again it must be emphasized that the committee is not saying that enterprising reporters may not dig out this material and publish it. It is saying only that such material should not be divulged by servants of the court.

These recommendations seem wise and fair to us. We could have justified even more stringent measures to ensure unprejudiced trials. If the press is unwilling to support even such minimal safeguards, we hope that it will at least have the decency to refrain from tearing its editorial hair when courts of appeal strike down convictions obtained in circumstances where sensationalist newspaper reporting has made it obviously impossible for a suspect to come before the bench with that presumption of innocence which, we have always believed, is an essential prerequisite to a fair trial.

The "Backlash"

There are two terms that we heartily dislike, and right at the moment we don't know which one we dislike the more. One of these is "Black Power," which a gang of Johnny-come-latelies had to raise just at the time when responsible Negro leadership was on the verge of achieving a major breakthrough in the area of civil rights. The other is "white backlash," a journalist's term for any development that could be interpreted as having overtones of white hostility to the Negro.

Of the two, we think that, forced to a choice, we would prefer to have people screaming "Black Power" rather than pontificating about a "white backlash." Madmen are usually less dangerous than fools, if only because the madman tends to be suicidal while the fool tends to be murderous. We all know that the Negro minority in the United States could not, even if it wished to do so, impose its power upon the white majority. But it is perfectly possible for those who talk about a "white backlash" to confirm large elements in the white majority in prejudices for which there are no rational, moral, or legal justifications.

The very word, "backlash," implies a reaction to some sort of aggression. Concealed within it is the notion of a "pushiness" on the part of the Negro to which the white man, understandably if not perhaps morally, reacts. It begs the question of whether the Negro has, as a matter of fact, been "pushy" and it sanctifies, at least by implication, a doctrine of gradualism which refuses to come to terms with the moral fact that the Negro has always been entitled to treatment as a full-fledged member of the human race and with the legal fact that he has, in this country, been entitled to all of the rights, privileges, and opportunities of an American citizen for over a hundred years.

That there has, as a matter of fact, been a hardening of white hearts against the Negro in this country in recent months would seem to be undeniable. We have observed, with a kind of ironic amusement, the spectacle of any number of fair-weather liberals running for shelter when they discovered that the Negro was not just making chit-chat when he talked about "Freedom Now" but was making serious demands which he was prepared to back up with the pressures necessary to win them. But surely "backlash" is not an appropriate synonym for turning tail? And, of course, we have never doubted that the great majority of our fellow-Caucasians took comfort in what seemed to them the fact that the Negro could not significantly disturb the status quo. But can sullen resentment at having found oneself to have been mistaken be dignified with any such actionful word as "backlash"?

It will help us a great deal in our present difficulties if we choose our words with care and with some concern for their connotations.

The Cresset
The Minor Mysteries of Christmas

By ALFRED R. LOOMAN

The reason the mysteries surrounding the Christmas story become more mysterious when anyone tries to explain them is that the explanations are usually based on the premise that God thinks like a 20th-century man. The Christmas story is one of beauty, drama, and mystery so perfect in itself that it can only be diminished when man tampers with it. But one cannot help but be intrigued by some of the unanswered questions the story of Bethlehem raises.

I find many of the questions running through my mind are connected with the inn and its occupants. I do not presume to know why God wanted His Son born in a manger, why there was no room elsewhere, or why He chose the shepherds, of all people, as the first to hear the news of Jesus' birth.

There is one character in this story who over the years, however, has been much maligned by man, and that is the innkeeper, who is never mentioned in the Gospel account which says only "there was no room for them in the inn." Though it has now been a few years since I was a pupil in the Primary section of Sunday School, I can recall rather vividly a picture on the cover of our Sunday School leaflet which showed a gruff looking innkeeper pointing Mary and Joseph toward the stable in the background. The impression we children received was that the innkeeper was a rough and unsympathetic person, yet for all we know he could have been a very kindhearted man, who, seeing Mary's condition, made room for them in the stable.

And it was a stable, a fact which the artists have never seemed to realize. The pictures on Christmas cards and every creche I have seen, make this stable appear to be a very comfortable little building constructed of California redwood. Since the Christmas story is beautiful enough as it is, it hardly needs the touches of glamor we try to bring to it. Actually, the stable was not a separate building but was part of the first floor of the inn. And it was made of stone because stone was plentiful but wood was scarce.

But to get back to some of the mysteries surrounding this story, one of the continuing ones is why God wanted His Son born in a manger, why there was no room else-

December 1966
Local Autonomy: Bane or Blessing?

By RICHARD SOMMERFELD
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The church is a dynamic institution. It is characterized by the possession of the Gospel, but that Gospel has not been granted to the church for purposes of protection and preservation. The Lord of the church established His church and gave to it the Gospel for purposes of proclamation. Being true to its Lord and to itself — both in possession and in proclamation of the Gospel — means that the church must be an energetic, dynamic institution of the faithful in Christ Jesus.

Being energetic, dynamic requires the members of the church to organize themselves in a fashion in keeping with the nature of the church — the possession of the Gospel — and in a manner that contributes to the effective and efficient purpose of the church — the proclamation of the Gospel among all men. At this point, however, we have two distinctively different factors associated in a single unit. We have the divine gift of the Gospel and the human contribution of organization. These two factors are not antithetical, but neither are they synonymous. One is of God and the other, in the case of the church, is of men in Christ.

The commission and challenge of the Lord that the church effect a mission to men requires of His people that they actively confront the tension that inevitably exists between the things of God and the things of man. This tension, pregnant with overtones of Biblical theology, is most mundanely evident in the patterns of organization and operation selected by the church for the accomplishment of its divinely assigned purpose: a mission to men, both within and without the church. Even as a church body is characterized by a theology, so also it is characterized by an organizational stance, and both theology and ecclesiastical organization must reflect the divinely imposed nature and purpose of the church if we are to be the church in this our time and place.

One of the strongest current organizational characteristics of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is local autonomy. This is the order by which the local congregation retains for itself veto authority in all administrative and operational matters of the institutional church. By definition and by actual practice this order is not intended to include, as the Handbook puts it (1.09a), those matters that "are in accordance with the Word of God." Other matters, the institutionally administrative and operational, are to be observed by the local congregation if there is "expediency of the resolution as applied to its [the congregation's] local condition," as judged by the congregation.

The purpose of this paper is to examine historically and currently the concept and practice of local autonomy. Particular attention will be given to the continued expediency of this polity order, and some recommendations will be offered for judicious consideration.

Institutional patterns of organization, once they come into being, tend to perpetuate themselves. This is particularly the case in religious bodies. Barring a crisis of considerable impact — Luther and the Reformation, Stephan and the Perry County colony — organizational patterns tend to persist. In the course of time adjustments may be made, but most of these adjustments are essentially modifications of or variations on the historic theme. Rarely does a religious body energetically enter into a critical re-examination of its organizational pattern, the vehicle of its mission to men. Perhaps it is the supernatural "atmosphere" that deters the members from such considerations. There may be interest, but usually this interest is effectively counter-balanced by hesitancy. In our own communion we have difficulty getting enthusiastic about the efforts of a "canon lawyer" or a "synodical politician."

There is also the reinforcement of generations. During the course of successive generations there is a tendency to attach to historic organizational patterns a validity, even a sanctity, that frequently far exceeds the intentions of the original formulators. This presumed validity soon becomes an identifying principle of the group. Any attempt to confront this inter-generationally derived validity immediately appears to many as a challenge to the identity of the entire body, and, on this basis, the confrontation must be repelled for the sake of the welfare of the entire body.

That a given view is based on a historic presumption does not automatically mean that the view is in error. If, however, we are to understand our current "vehicles" for fulfilling our mission, it is necessary that we "get behind" the practice to examine the situations that originally brought these practices into being and that provided these practices with historic validity.

The Background in Germany

In his study of Government in the Missouri Synod (St. Louis: CPH, 1947, p. 7) Carl Mundinger pointed out that in church government Luther emphasized two things: his concept of the church (una sancta ecclesia) and his concept of the local congregation (die Gemeinde). Circumstances of the day prompted Luther to employ secular princes in the organization and conduct of the institutional church. As Mundinger put it, "The fall of 1525 — more specifically, November 30, 1525, the day when Luther asked John (Elector of Saxony) to bring order into the ecclesiastical chaos — is the birthday of the rule of princes in the Lutheran Church" (pp. 13-14). With Luther's encouragement the pattern soon spread among other Lutheran princes.
Though the organizational pattern employed in the Reformation church did not necessarily violate Luther’s concepts of either the church or the congregation, it is worth noting that the actual pattern of organization derived strongly from social circumstances of the day. Among the more influential social factors were the inadequacy of priests in parishes; the inexpérience of the laity; the growth of the reformation, which required organization and functional integration; and the available power structure of the princes. Luther acted in a fashion that he regarded as expedient, in the best sense of the term and without the slightest negative connotation. Luther did not provide for local autonomy, and apparently he was not disturbed at this.

The course of history is difficult to plot in advance, however, and some years later some unusual situations occurred. For example, Luther’s 1525 efforts “culminated in a Roman Catholic king as the supreme bishop of the Lutheran Church in his beloved Saxony” in 1830 (Mundinger, p. 16). The 1830 situation in Saxony was not characterized by local autonomy, and this is both the period and the place from which came our institutional forefathers.

Saxon congregations during the decade of the 1830’s exhibited little local autonomy. “The procedure in calling a pastor shows how little power the congregation possessed in Saxony” (Mundinger, p. 31). The actual selection of a pastor for a congregation was made by the superintendent of the district and the collator, a kind of circuit counselor. Proposal by these men frequently resulted in the candidate preaching a trial sermon for the congregation. The members of the congregation’s Kirchenrat could express any objections they had, but this right indicates little power and only a weak negative voice. The congregations simply were not in a position to conduct their own affairs to any significant degree. This was left to the vertical organizational levels of the church.

The practical experience in church organization of our Saxon forefathers certainly did not prepare them for what was to take place in America, nor can this experience be considered a direct antecedent of our current organizational pattern. Mundinger appropriately sums up the Saxon experience by saying, “There was no democracy in the baggage of the future Missourians when they put out to sea in November, 1838, even as there was no democracy in the State Church of Saxony” (p. 33). From an antecedent point of view the Stephanite movement was a consistent, albeit perverse, effort along the lines of the historic pattern in Saxony.

The Perry County Experience

The situation in Perry County and the expulsion of Martin Stephan are well known to all, and the details need not be repeated here. What does deserve emphasis is the institutional meaning of Stephan’s removal. The loss of Stephan meant the loss of the colony’s power figure and a disruption of the organizational structure. There was no one present obviously appropriate to pick up the leadership of the colonists. Some of the men who might have filled the vacant position, presumably in modified form, had severe doubts about themselves. Others were so closely identified with the deposed leader that they hardly dared to step forward aggressively.

C.F.W. Walther came forward to offer the emigrants not only an analysis of their situation but also a sociological or administrative solution. In his study of The Rise of “Missouri Lutheranism” (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago Divinity School, 1946) Theodore Bachmann neatly summarizes Walther’s Altenburg Theses:

These must be read in their environmental and theological setting. Their ultimate importance lay in saving the Saxons from disorganization, and in heralding the basic principles of congregational polity for use in the rising tide of German Lutheran immigrants coming from a background of ecclesiastical establishment. The issue, which was not simply that of polity, involved insights based on personal conviction and hard-won experience. Walther’s “Altenburg Theses” were thus not merely a personal formulation, but also a notably social product. (p. 135)

He gave the Saxons’ emotional and doctrinal problems a theological solution. Congregationalism and the democratic implications of the priesthood of all believers belonged together. The established churches on the continent had failed to realize the congregational idea implicit, as Walther thought, in the Reformation itself. On the banks of the Mississippi, bishops, superintendents, hierarchy, and political interference would have no admittance. Instead the Reformation would attain its original intention so far as concerns polity. (pp. 136-137). He built his case as though the past were stocked with precedent which, as in English common law, might be quoted with authoritative finality. That history is much broader than this mattered little at Altenburg in 1841. (p. 138)

In his analysis Bachmann touches on the influence social factors, both within and without the colony, might have had on Walther’s formulations. Unfortunately this dimension of the early life of our church body has not been pursued to the degree that it probably deserves. Bachmann does note that the Anzeiger des Westens, a prominent St. Louis newspaper, was “notorious” for its anti-clerical tone (p. 140). The viewpoint of this newspaper was well-known among the Saxons, clergy and laity alike, in St. Louis and in Perry County.

Not to be overlooked is the influence of Jacksonian democracy in our nation during this same period of time. Glyndon Van Deusen (The Jacksonian Era, Harper and Row, 1959) concludes that for “these Americans of the
Development of Walther's Views

After coming to St. Louis the Saxons chose to separate themselves from the developing metropolitan area, rather than accept the proffered tract of land on the outskirts of St. Louis. Perry County did provide the colonists with a degree of isolation. But it seems a bit one-sided even to imply that these same colonists, in St. Louis and in Perry County, were not aware of or in any significant fashion influenced by the more widely developing social and political climate of our country. This "external" dimension of the early history of our church body deserves thorough research and consideration, and such will have to be done before any definitive history of Walther, Perry County happenings, and the development of synod can be produced.

Interestingly enough, the "American" influence was not missed by some of the critics of Walther. Without suggesting any validity in Wilhelm Loethe's sharp criticism of Walther and the new synod, it is worth noting that Loethe complained, among other things, about applying the words of Luther, not written for American conditions, in support of personal ideas and about falling prey to the influence of "the American desire and hankering after license" (quoted by Theodore Buenger, "The Saxon Immigrants of 1839" in Dau (ed.) Ebenezer, CPH, 1922, p. 15, from Loethe's Die kirchlichen Lage, Noerdlinger, 1850, p. 104).

A year after the Altenburg Debate "Old" Trinity in St. Louis began to write a congregational constitution. This occupied the congregation for approximately eighteen months, from early 1842 until July of 1843. Much of the time was devoted to checking and rechecking lest anything in the proposed constitution once again make the membership "subject to Stephanistic priestcraft" (Bachmann, p. 143). The end product clearly vested power in the congregation as a whole.

Growth at Trinity soon resulted in the development of other congregations in the St. Louis area. From one perspective St. Louis now had a number of congregations. From another point of view there was only one congregation." As J.L. Neve explained the situation in his History of the Lutheran Church in America (Lutheran Literary Board, 1934):

All Saxons living in St. Louis, though gradually dividing into separate congregations, constituted a Gesamtgemeinde, with Walther as pastor primarius, or Oberpfarrer. The pastors and elders of the district congregations constituted the Generalvorstand, all administrative affairs, including the treasury, exercise of church discipline, and nomination of candidates for ministerial office, being managed by all the congregations as a unit. This plan of organization was maintained until after Walther's death in 1887. (p. 181)

The pattern described by Neve was not a direct abandonment of local autonomy, but it was certainly a modification of the original emphasis found in Trinity's first constitution. It can be argued, and with good evidence, that a strict or narrow interpretation of local autonomy was not practical once the growth in membership resulted in a number of congregations. Not every congregation was necessarily able to provide for itself completely. What one could not do alone the several could do as a unit. If on no other basis, it was simply a matter of good sense. It is not the purpose of this paper to discount this practice. However, notice that in actual practice the concept of local autonomy as practically employed by Walther himself and those who had gone through the Stephan "affair" was flexible. Without denying local autonomy, the very persons who first proposed it were not rigid in its application. It can be reasonably suggested that these people saw local autonomy as a general principle, derived from the concept of the priesthood of all believers and the individual responsibilities associated with that priesthood. This fits completely the Perry County experience, Walther's analysis of that situation, and his polity proposals. But these same people did not see local autonomy as an explicit and inviolate organizational pattern that must be observed in compulsive terms. There is a difference here, and it is an important difference that we must remember if we intend to draw on the historic experience of our forefathers.

The difference noted in the above paragraph might be illustrated through the sociological distinction in the concepts of form, function, and purpose. Purpose is the end or goal toward which activity is carried on. Function is what is actually done or ought to be done. Form concerns itself with how something is to be — in this case, how a congregation or church body is to be organized. In some respects Walther's famous "proper form" of a Christian congregation is almost a mislabeling. The theses are primarily concerned with function and purpose. For example, Thesis 24 (Walther and the Church, edited by Dallmann, Dau and Engelder, CPH, 1938, p. 100) begins with a statement of purpose: "In order that the Word of God may richly dwell in a congregation...." This is followed by an emphasis on function: "the congregation should furthermore, if possible, establish an Ev. Lutheran school for children and for this purpose call in Christian order an orthodox, godly, and competent teacher, pledge him to adherence to the divine Word of the Old and the New Testament and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church...." Only the final portion of the thesis deals with form, and even then it
The Founding of Synod

In May, 1846, a preliminary draft of a constitution for the forthcoming synod was prepared at a meeting in St. Louis. The preliminary draft did not contain the now famous disclaimer that synod is not an ecclesiastical government exercising legislative or coercive powers and that synodical resolutions are not binding on congregations if such resolutions appear inexpedient, per local conditions, in the judgment of the congregations. There simply was nothing of this — nor anything akin to it — in the preliminary draft. Quite to the contrary, there was a list of items under the heading “Prerogatives of Synod.” Among the items included was “supervision of the manner in which ministers and teachers on synodical territory conduct their office” (Bachmann, p. 356). Apparently no one was unduly disturbed by the absence of a synodical disclaimer or the presence of synodical prerogatives. The proposed constitution was printed in Der Lutheraner, September 5, 1846.

The organizational convention, meeting in Chicago a year later, passed the proposed constitution, the constitution without the synodical qualifier. According to the Proceedings of the first convention, an amendment was later proposed to the constitution. This amendment, translated from the Erster Synodal-Bericht, reads:

Whereas, with respect to the self-government of the individual congregations, the synod is merely an advisory body, therefore none of the latter’s decisions, when these are laid upon the congregation, have any binding power. Only when the individual congregation has examined it, and voluntarily accepted and approved it through formal congregational action, can a synodical resolution be binding. Should a congregation find such a resolution contrary to the Word of God or unsuited to its own requirements, it has the right of rejecting said resolution. (p. 7)

The previously passed constitution required that all amendments be approved by the member congregations. Successive convention Synodal-Berichte indicate a decided lack of interest in the amendment. Pastors reported to the 1848 convention they had forgotten to submit the amendment to their congregations, and at the time of the 1849 convention most congregations still had not acted. The 1850 convention Synodal-Bericht “reports that the amendment had not gained the support of every congregation and therefore must be considered lost” (Mundinger, p. 192).

The amendment is certainly an official part of the constitution of synod. It became so when it appeared in the revised synodical constitution of 1854 and was adopted along with the document as a whole (Bachmann, p. 232).

The Constitution of 1854

The 1854 constitution marked a significant change in the organizational pattern of the Missouri Synod. This was the time when synod divided itself into districts, originally only four. The development of district structure necessitated several constitutional changes. A new constitution, though still greatly like the original, was adopted to adequately provide for the new circumstance of synod and districts. All of this was most appropriate and necessary. It is very interesting, however, how the predecessor of the current Article VII came into official being. It would be difficult, on the basis of the evidence, to say that synod as “merely an advisory body” and congregations as ultimate judges of the local suitability of synodical resolutions constitutes one of the formal foundation stones of polity in the Missouri Synod. Local autonomy certainly has its roots in Perry County, but our current concept of local autonomy has grown far beyond the Perry County, the C.F.W. Walther, and the early congregational and synodical conceptions.
The Present Pattern

The particular organizational form that we today employ toward the fulfillment of our mission to men is not an instance of historic continuity of the form employed in the very early days of our church. Nor can it be said that what we have today is what our forefathers intended but, for one reason or another, did not achieve. What we have today is the result of a long period of social development.

Our current "brand" of local autonomy is well illustrated by the organizational pattern of our congregations. The pastor is the key figure. Immediately it must be added that this situation by itself is not a matter of either right or wrong. It is simply a case of our congregations being organized about the office and person of the pastor. That this is the case should not be surprising to anyone. It is the pastor who is the trained leader in the congregation. He is the one who knows, at least presumably so, and accordingly much of the leadership emanates from him. The organizational pattern in actual practice then devolves from the pattern of leadership.

Our clergy, particularly in contrast with some others, are highly trained specialists. Before achieving eligibility for a call, it is necessary that the man spend many years in formal training in specified schools of instruction. We do not accept a man on the basis of his charismatic claim. We accept a man on the basis of institutional achievement and production. If, in addition, the man is characteristically gifted, so much the better. But charisma alone will not carry a man into original office. Institutional training, however, will. Again this is not a matter of good or bad, right or wrong. It is simply a matter of the way — the forms — we have chosen to accomplish our purpose.

The emphasis on the institutional form is evident in the case of a seminary graduate entering his first congregation. The members of the congregation accept the man willingly and, most often, with enthusiasm. They are prepared to follow his lead, even though they do not historically know the individual or what manner of person he is. What they are actually willing to follow is the individual’s record of institutional preparation and training for the position of pastor.

In view of the emphasis on institutional leadership it is not surprising that the operational pattern of the congregation centers pretty much around the pastor. This is reinforced by our Lutheran emphasis on Biblical theology. The pastor is the only one in most congregations who has formally involved himself in advanced theological studies. He is the one, in most cases — whose formal training has included a study of the history of the church and its ways. He is the one who has gained a more than passing acquaintance with the structural order of our church body and, through his direct or indirect contact with established churchmen, has learned how things are done in the Missouri Synod. As the professional, full-time churchman in the congregation, the pastor "naturally" emerges as the authority figure. This is not a denial of the priesthood of all believers. It merely points out that within our society and within the order of our church body, the pastor of the congregation becomes something of the "personification" of the priesthood of all believers. Theologically and administratively the membership of the congregation is strongly dependent on the pastor.

With local autonomy and focus on the pastor, there is every opportunity for the congregation to be an example of energetic functioning, employing various forms, toward effectively and efficiently accomplishing the purposes and mission of the church. Most certainly this is the intention of providing local autonomy, the intention of providing local freedom to capitalize on opportunities without being fettered by hierarchical restrictions. The concept of the priesthood of all believers includes the idea of opportunity just as much as it includes the idea of responsibility.

Both within the history of our church and within the current scene there are many instances of congregations and pastors who have evangelically exploited local autonomy to further the work and purpose of the church. It is unfortunate that such is not universally the case.

The very organizational situation that permits capitalizing on opportunities also permits stagnation. The beautiful freedom-to-be that can be found in local autonomy can also be turned into a freedom-from pattern. A previous illustration employed the case of a seminary graduate entering his first congregation. Our current organizational pattern makes it possible for that graduate’s former roommate to enter his first congregation and begin going to “seed” the day after his installation. The same focus on the pastor which makes possible exploiting his training in leading the congregation also makes possible defaulting on training, with the concomitant stagnation of all congregational life and activity. The difficulty does not lie in the general system of selecting a pastor. The difficulty does not lie in the membership of the congregation. The difficulty does not lie in the concept of local autonomy, which, in itself is a functional element of organization subject to many kinds of employment. The problem centers in the form through which we have chosen to implement the mission of the church.

The Missing Link

In our total church organization there is a serious form-void. This void occurs in the formal relating of the locally autonomous congregation to the broader organizational structure of our church body. We — you, I, all of us — have historically erected a vertical structure in the organization of districts and synod. We have established local units of horizontal organization, the congregations. We have granted considerable authority to the vertical structure, and we have retained local autonomy for the horizontal. But we have not effectively
related the horizontal to the vertical, and *vice versa*. Specifically, the organizational void occurs at the level of the circuit counselor's office.

The synodical Handbook offers perhaps the best evidence of the organizational void occurring at the level of the circuit counselor. The Handbook says that the counselor shall "visit" congregations (3.65); he shall "inquire" about purity of doctrine; "inquire" about attendances and participation; "inquire" about defenses against evil influences; and "inquire" about excommunications (3.75). All this "to bring about to the greatest possible degree the achievement of the Synod's objectives" or purposes (3.71). However, while visiting and inquiring — both functional elements — "the Circuit Counselor shall keep in mind the glory and responsibility of the universal priesthood of all believers as it applies to the congregations" (3.75a). Nowhere does the Handbook spell out the formal authority of the counselor's office, as it does with marked clarity for other offices in the vertical structure.

There is a void in the specification of forms, particularly of authority and administrative procedure, in the office of counselor. If the individual counselor is to energetically function toward the achievement of the purposes of his office, it will have to be on the basis of his person and his personal relations with those within his circuit. This is fine as long as those within the circuit are willing to ascribe authority to the person of the counselor. But an *impasse* occurs if anyone, especially an ordained colleague, chooses in any fashion to operationally or administratively challenge or ignore the counselor, either directly or indirectly. When this occurs, there is no established avenue — form — for resolving the situation.

The absence of a vertical check on the horizontal balance permits the horizontal operation, the congregation, to go its way as it sees fit, if only it avoids the more blatant forms of institutional insurrection. Equally important is the fact that the horizontal units are not in a position of form to provide a check on the vertical balance, and — some have complained about this at great length — the vertical structure can go its way pretty much as it sees fit. It is organizationally unfortunate that in recent days some have concluded their only effective influence with the vertical organization of synod lies in a partial or total economic boycott. Such things ought not so to be, and, from the perspective of the theory or organizations in relation to the mission of the church, such things need not be.

In an odd fashion it appears that Walther's "proper form" has become historically inverted so that function and purpose derive from a minimum of forms, even an absence of forms. The result is a focusing on formal freedom at the expense of productive function and purpose-achievement. For example, the overwhelming majority of our congregations, as revealed by congregational research data, do not have an on-going evangelism program (function) toward soul-winning (purpose). No wonder 10-20% of the congregations in most districts do not report a single adult baptism or confirmation in a given year. These congregations are not the church in tension or in mission. They are the church at rest, and vertically no one is in a position and form to do much of anything about it.

**The Price of Freedom**

Our current *style* of local autonomy emphasizes protection of forms, including freedom *from* forms. It is the contention of this paper that we have been and are accordingly paying the price for this in vertical and horizontal function and accomplishing the mission and purpose of the church.

Local autonomy must be seen as strictly a form, never an end in itself. As a form, local autonomy must be regarded as both expedient and expendable. It has no validity in and of itself. What validity local autonomy does have derives from its effective and efficient implementation of the purposes and functions of our congregations and synod. The whole idea of local autonomy is a cultural construct, not a divine imperative. As long as it serves to channel the functions toward achievement of the purposes in our mission to men, it has substantiated itself. When this is not the case, local autonomy must be modified and corrected, just as any other malfunctioning form must be corrected for the sake of the whole.

It is the contention of this paper that excessive emphasis on local autonomy as an end in itself has served to deter both efficiency and effectiveness in goal accomplishment. Counter-vailing controls are needed to achieve and retain a balance, and such controls are the first recommendation.

**Recommendation 1: The Counselor**

The first specific recommendation is for more authority and power in the office of circuit counselor, backed by the formal authority of the district praeidium. This calls for congregations giving counselors the right to establish explicit expectations for circuit congregations. It would become a responsibility of the circuit counselor to prepare a formal statement of expectations for the coming year for each congregation in his circuit. A wise counselor will, of course, set about this task by first consulting carefully with both the individual congregation and district officials. There is no thought here of circuit counselors tilting back in their swivel chairs and making up out of the blue a set of expectations. The thought is that the counselors will carefully work out with each congregation a statement of goals for the coming year. These goals should derive from the application of the purpose and mission of the church to the individual congregation's local circumstances, both within the congregation and within the community. It would still be the prerogative of the congregation, after it has accepted the goals, autonomously to prepare whatever forms appear

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appropriate and necessary for the accomplishment of these goals. The counselor may indeed assist the pastor and congregation in arriving at needed forms, but this responsibility still resides with the congregation.

The statement of expectations for the year should be expressed in terms of minimal standards. It profits no one anything to set up goals that are realistically unattainable. The goals must be an honest expression of the opportunities and possibilities of the congregation in its peculiar circumstances. As such, the statement of expectations is actually a set of minimal standards. This is what might reasonably be expected of such-and-such a congregation, in its particular circumstances, in relation to the purposes of the church and the congregation's claim to being the church in that place. Local initiative can still move far beyond the minimal.

The statement of expectation should never serve as a restriction on the willing and enthusiastic. Its intent is to spur the delinquent. The pastor and congregation that are doing a job in their place in relation to the purpose and functions of the church have nothing to fear. On the contrary, the statement of expectations for such pastors and congregations becomes, a year later, documentary evidence that they are doing a job. This makes local autonomy a freedom for doing, not, as it so often is today, a freedom from doing.

The preparation of explicit expectations deserves annual evaluation. Initiated by the counselor, there should be an annual evaluation of every congregation. This evaluation may be conducted by the counselor, the pastor, and the church council meeting as a local committee of the whole. In the case of the counselor's own congregation, the district president or his delegate may fill the role otherwise played by the counselor. The purpose of the annual evaluation is to determine just exactly what has been accomplished, what has not been accomplished, and why in either or both cases. This evaluation becomes the basis for the preparation of expectations for the coming year.

Recommendation 2: The Council of Counselors

On the district level there ought to be a council of counselors, assisted by the district praesidium and district executives. This council should review the annual assessments of all congregations in the district. In most cases this review would probably be routine, but even then it would provide responsible persons in the district with a marvelous insight into the condition of the district per the congregations. A natural follow-up to the district council-level review would be a direct communication with each congregation in the district. For the functioning congregation this communication becomes a commendation from the brethren and an encouragement to get on with the accomplishment of the purpose of the church. For the recalcitrant — both clergy and congregations — the communication, backing up the counselor's local assessment, would be a prod to take up the work of the church toward the accomplishment of the purpose of the church.

Before this recommendation can be implemented, a major effort will have to be put forth to develop explicit expectations for pastors and congregations in general. Unfortunately we have devoted ourselves to this only in the most general and tenuous fashion. For example, what exactly is a pastor to be? The Call document contains only the broadest of generalities, and the accompanying letter is usually phrased more along the lines of attracting a man than challenging that man. In my study of The Role of Lutheran Ministers (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Washington University, St. Louis, 1957) it is evident that clergymen themselves have a very wide range of views, and some of these views are actually in conflict with others. Congregational constitutions are usually not much better. They are, necessarily, I grant, general. But all of this only means that we have not prepared for ourselves that which we must have if we are to know ourselves and in any significant fashion employ mutual admonition and encouragement.

As a former parish pastor who retains a strong affection for the parish, I can readily envision some concerns, even fears, in the minds of parish ministers as they give thought to the recommendation. Some might even feel that the recommendation violates the priesthood of all believers or in subtle fashion denies either the right of the congregation or the spirit of the Call from and into a circumscribed unit of the church. My answer is quite simple. I do not see the priesthood of all believers as a parochial, provincial protector of a private bailiwick. I see this concept as a significant element in the Body of Christ, the church, and as the members of the body are joined one to another in opportunity, so also they are joined one to another in responsibility and accountability. For too long we have emphasized the element of individuality in the priesthood of all believers at the expense of the corporate. The recommendation does not deny the basic rights of the congregation; it seeks only the energetic struggle, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, toward the fulfillment of those rights. The recommendation does indeed imply something about the rights of the congregation. It implies that these rights are not fulfilled when pastor and people are stagnating or defaulting on the purpose of the church. The recommendation in no way denies the concept of the Call, either theologically or sociologically. Quite the opposite, the recommendation constitutes a form of implementing the very idea of the Call.

Recommendation 3: Declarations of Candidacy for Office

The third recommendation calls for encouraging — even requiring — prospective candidates for positions in the vertical structure to declare themselves for office, announcing their qualifications and their "platforms." This means bringing the elections for vertical organiza-
There is nothing inherently wrong with a man declaring himself a candidate for office. His announcement, coupled with a statement of qualifications and proposed function or program, can be completely honest. Such an invitation, even requirement, makes conveniently possible whatever adjustments seem appropriate and at the end of the time period there is no more room for delinquent functioning in the vertical than there is in the horizontal unit of the congregation. If critical evaluation by the vertical is appropriate for congregations to stimulate functioning toward purpose-achievement, it is equally appropriate for the vertical as a stimulating control by the horizontal units of congregations.

At first blush this may seem a bit unusual, especially for the church. However, the current practice of covert declaration and even electioneering is hardly a commendable characteristic of the church. The falseness of our employment of the form of democratic elections is, I contend, more a discommendation of our church body than is the possibility of an element of the unusual that might be found by some in the above recommendation. There is nothing inherently wrong with a man declaring himself a candidate for office. His announcement, coupled with a statement of qualifications and proposed functioning or program, can be completely honest. Such an invitation, even requirement, makes conveniently possible effective and direct control of the vertical structure by the horizontal units.

Election to office for a specified period of time needs to be seen as a form. An important part of that form is periodic evaluation of the incumbent’s program and production, just as in the congregation, per the previous recommendation. There is no more reason for not evangelically challenging the vertical office holder than there is for allowing the individual congregation to go its way without controls and evaluation. Election to office simply means that the constituency assigns the individual for a specified time certain functions in relation to the purposes of the whole. At the end of the time period there is a scheduled evaluation, just as recommended for congregations. This evaluation begins with the incumbent declaring himself for re-election, along with the possible announced candidacy of others. It is doubtful that some of the extremes of campaigning found in efforts to gain secular office need be employed here, but there should be a structured opportunity for the electorate to gain comparative information before being asked to cast a vote. The recommendation aims at making conveniently possible whatever adjustments seem appropriate and at reinforcing whatever functioning the electorate finds satisfactory and in keeping with corporate purposes.

The present practice of filling vertical, elective offices — with all its calculated coyness and carefully practiced public modesty — indirectly encourages exactly the kind of functional inertia that the previous recommendation sought to dispel from congregational life and work. Our frequent failure to exploit the form of comparatively electing after critical evaluation permits the occurrence of “deadwood” in organizational positions, and there is no more room for delinquent functioning in the vertical than there is in the horizontal unit of the congregation. If critical evaluation by the vertical is appropriate for congregations to stimulate functioning toward purpose-achievement, it is equally appropriate for the vertical as a stimulating control by the horizontal units of congregations.

All of this requires seeing a vertical office as strictly a form, a very necessary form. But such office is still only a means toward a total-group end or purpose. Such office is not and cannot be an end in itself for the individual, and the expendable nature of both vertical offices and office holders is evident from Article XI, Section A, of the synodical constitution. For our church body to function in relation to its mission and purpose, as the framers of our polity intended, it is necessary that there be equal and reciprocal control between local autonomy and vertical organization. A deficiency in either direction puts the entire system, as it has been conceived, out of balance, with a resulting deterrent to the accomplishment of ultimate purposes.

The church is a dynamic institution, and this thought returns us to the opening sentence of this essay. Presuming the full significance of the church being characterized by the possession and proclamation of the Gospel, this essay has attempted to examine, within the limitations of the time and space allotted the essayist, the development of our particular and peculiar Missouri Lutheran pattern of organization for the implementation of our mission to men. Some recommendations have been offered for your thoughtful and critical consideration.

As I have written elsewhere (The Church of the 21st Century: Prospects and Proposals, Concordia Publishing House, 1965, p. 103):

What the church... becomes will indeed depend on the Lord of the church and on the Holy Spirit. God has never let His people down, though they have often slipped miserably because of themselves. God, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, is more than ready to do His part. The big question is you and I. We can wiggle and twist and rationalize all we want, but ultimately we cannot avoid our responsibility and accountability to the Lord of the church.

And that responsibility and accountability includes effectively organizing ourselves as the church in our mission to men.
"I just don’t understand it," commented a Presbyterian Church School teacher on the Gospel according to Saint John. “It’s the only one I understand,” said the one dearest to my heart. When I told Episcopal Bishop Horace Donegan of a Bible Study Class using Saint John as its basis he commented, "Ah! That’s the great Gospel!"

Quite varied reactions, but why “the great Gospel”? It could be established, I believe, that of all the disciples of Jesus, John was the best student. It could be established that his Gospel is the most enlightening. It could be established that understanding of it is a mark of saint- hood.

Yet this article is intended to bring out one great truth of that Gospel: the truth that all human beings are creatures of God; some human beings are conscious servants of God; and a relatively few individuals know themselves to be children of God. This truth is expressed within the narrow scope of the first fourteen lines of John’s Gospel.

Creatures of God

In line three we read, “. . . all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.” In other words, every human being was created by God. Each shares with the other a heart which distinguishes between physical life and death; physical senses which relate them to the rest of God’s creation, both inanimate and animate; minds which enable them to sense nature, absorb facts, make decisions and recall past actions; and spirits which determine their actions in various situations on the level of human life.

As mere creatures of God, however, human beings are essentially animals. More sophisticated, perhaps, but still animals. By association with human beings who have come into a closer relationship with God, they may take on the appearance of being more than creatures of God; yet in isolation from servants or children of God, they manifest their animal-like qualities by viewing and living life as if there were no God. They have no spiritual relationship with God. They are born, grow up, and become materially successful businessmen, scientists, or artists greatly applauded by others, in some cases. Yet they never quite manage to establish a vital relationship with God through the spirit.

Analogies always seem to fall down somewhere, but let’s give this one a try.

Let’s compare a creature of God with a creation of man, such as an automobile. Man can design and build an automobile. Yet it is neutral toward its designer. He can drive it by direct physical control, to be sure, but so can anyone else. It cannot think for itself or have any emotion of itself. It does not have the capacity to obey or disobey him, except by direct control. It is incapable of real existence, existence which is actively related to its creator in every circumstance. Anyone with an ignition key can drive it, whether it be the rightful owner or a thief.

There are people in the world quite similar to that automobile in their relationship with God. Being unresponsive to God except by some direct physical action, they naturally tend to do things which may or may not be in accordance with God’s will. They are quite neutral toward God, despite even a real interest in religion.

Servants of God

In line six we read that, “There was a man sent from God whose name was John.” John the Baptist is in a category beyond mere creaturehood. Since God sent him, he was a servant of God. As a matter of fact, Jesus put him in a category above that of all previous servants of God.

It was Abraham who was first called a “servant of God.” God made an amazing breakthrough with Abraham. Somehow, He managed to communicate with him by some invisible, spiritual means—a kind of spiritual whisper in the ear—so that Abraham was prompted by God to leave his homeland for “the promised land.” Similarly, God produced other servants such as Moses, who led the Israelites from slavery back to the promised land, and Jeremiah, who delivered God’s messages to the people of Israel despite imprisonment and hardship.

Servants of God were able both to speak and act for God. This was a tremendous breakthrough. It was so glorious that when human life ends these servants of God—men who trusted God—will enter into the joy of their Lord.

Yet something was still missing.

To pursue our previous analogy, the man who designed and built an automobile now has a chauffeur to drive it. The chauffeur can carry out specific commands for his boss and actually do some thinking of his own which aids God’s purposes. He can select travel routes or maintain the car or make quick decisions to avoid accidents. The chauffeur is not neutral to his boss, as is the car. He is trying to carry out instructions to the best of his ability.

There are people in the world quite similar to the chauffeur. They try very hard to please their boss, God, and to take good care of their responsibilities for him. They may attend church regularly, serve on church committees, and actively seek new members.

Yet something is missing still.
Children of God

There's still a big difference between a master-servant relationship and a friend-friend relationship. Only the latter can provide the joy of companionship, the peace of harmony, and the warmth of real affection.

The nature of this new and wonderful relationship is found in line twelve: "...but to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children (or sons and daughters) of God..."

Thus God expressed Himself through the life of one man, Jesus Christ. Whoever believed that Jesus Christ was God expressing Himself in human form came into this new and wonderful relationship with God. "No longer do I call you servants," said Jesus, "but friends." To receive Jesus Christ, to listen to Him, to take Him seriously and to obey Him—this meant that an individual could become a friend of God or a child of God.

This new relationship with God is unrelated to physical birth. As Saint John wrote, those "born of God" are born "not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." Just as Jesus Himself had been conceived by the Holy Spirit—by the power of God alone—so other individuals can be born into God's one great family by the power of that same Holy Spirit.

This is a great mystery. One of the great attributes of God is that He is inaccessible by reason. He is accessible only as He reveals Himself by grace to faith.

I don't propose to try to explain this mystery. I can't. I do propose to describe some basic characteristics of those who have become children of God.

One characteristic is trust.

Trust is the ability to be in a position where life seems impossible, without questioning God's power to make everything work for good. It is the ability to seem defeated, yet continue to expect the promised victory. It is the ability to believe God's promises despite every outward indication that they could not possibly be fulfilled. It is the ability to face these barriers and watch them fall, one by one.

Another characteristic is wisdom.

This means not only the wisdom of the world which comes from books and colleges and association with people of great learning, but the wisdom which God alone can provide.

It is the wisdom which enables one to perceive, even on short notice, one's relationship with God, diagnose the barriers between individuals and God, and attempt to remedy the condition when it is not right. It is the wisdom which discerns in current decisions far-reaching consequences which will work for good. It is the wisdom to leave in the hands of God much that others would try to bring to a quick conclusion.

Still another—but the greatest—characteristic of the children of God is love.

Love is the only sure evidence that anyone is a child of God. I don't mean the kind of love which puts father or mother before God—although one or more parents may well serve God's purposes—but the kind of love which is really a response to the love which God has already shown to that individual. "We love, because he first loved us," wrote Saint John. "Love one another as I have loved you," said Jesus. "Love knows no limit to its endurance," wrote Saint Paul, "no end to its trust, no fading of its hope; it can outlast anything."

Love never bribes or forces. It always remains concerned. It always keeps loving.

So What?

"This is all well and good," you may say, "for theologians and historians, but what about today? Isn't this sort of thinking out of date in this modern age?" One of my friends often puts it differently. She tells me that one day the Bible will be re-written to agree with life as it is today.

I can assure you that this kind of thinking is not out of date and that the Bible will not be re-written to agree with modern life. It is life today which either must be revised in the light of the teachings of the Bible, or else become quite meaningless in terms of the eternal purposes of God.

Today, we still have people who are only creatures of God, people who go about trying to satisfy their personal hungers and desires without consideration for the desires and hungers of others. They include not only the criminals of the street but also many citizens considered quite solid who are "moral" only because a certain amount of morality pays off in our society.

We still have people who are servants of God, people who earnestly strive to do God's will, though they often miss the point. In the fall of 1963 President Johnson said that it was arrant nonsense to say that everyone is not a child of God. He is quite wrong. Since he made that statement a very few days after the assassination of President Kennedy, it is hard to see how the irony of what he said could have escaped him. Whenever individuals merely go along with right action, they are something less than servants of God. Whenever individuals act in the belief that they are doing God's will, they serve God.

We still have people who are children of God, too. We have people who go about with trust and understanding and love, just as Jesus did. We still have individuals who truly believe that God is their Father and all men their brothers. We still have individuals who have the power to bring others closer to God.

But they are too few.

The great Christian task of this age and every age is to bring new members into God's family as His children. We cannot do it by assuming that everyone is a child of God, but by understanding Saint John's Gospel where he said, "...but to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God."
The Theatre

A Delicate Balance

BY WALTER SORRELL

Although a great many things have happened on and off-Broadway this season so far, very little has made more than a small dent in our memory. Again, plays coming from England have fared much better than anything we ourselves could offer. It is particularly the bitter comedy (also referred to as dark and sick) which so acutely flows from the pens of the English dramatists, as if they desired to celebrate their freedom from having to rule the proverbial waves. Liberated from phony importance, caste-consciousness, and self-styled snobism, they are now among the world's best writers for the theater, and their imported products merit discussion in a future column.

Peter Weiss's "The Investigation" may be a good example of the questionable stageworthiness of the documentary play, now so frequently being written in Germany. Weiss calls his play an "oratorio in 11 cantatas." In essence, it is a dramatic reading of statements, depositions and testimonies issued during the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial. It is a documentary or political drama in the true Piscatorian sense of the epic theater. Its weakness — underlined by a rather pedestrian directorial approach by Ulu Grosbard — lies in the very fact of its being as real as reality, but a reality somewhat telescoped and forced to serve certain purposes. One of them is to blame Germany's big industry for having profited from the activities in the Auschwitz camp. I suppose one could go much farther and accuse all the powers that were of complicity through silence. This includes everyone from the Pope (whom Hochhuth took as his target) to the English and American bankers and politicians to the little man in Germany who conveniently indulged in not seeing what was so obvious. The enumeration of inhuman bestiality does not create drama. At best it nauseates a public that has become conditioned to violence through the decades. Ann Frank's symbolic tragedy tells more than the belated news of six million innocent people being slaughtered more cruelly than cattle. Ann was meaningful. Millions of Ann Franks blur our vision.

Now about another kind of meaningfulness. Edward Albee is a skillful playwright, particularly in finding the soft spots of society and in nailing down our guilt feelings. In "The Zoo Story" his hero tells of an unpleasant encounter with a dog. In his new play it is a cat of which Tobias speaks, a cat he had killed because he felt it no longer liked him. He wanted to be well liked by the cat, a symbol for "other people." He would not tell of the incident, were it not important to Albee to show us man in his desperate search for his own identity.

There is Tobias, married to a domineering woman, living in the same house with his wife's alcoholic sister — a trite theatrical figure by now playing the fool's part with his prerogative to say the truth —, haunted by his daughter's regularly occurring flights from her various marriages. He had a fleeting affair with his sister-in-law; his daughter seems to relate the wreackages of her marriages to the death of a brother many years ago. Tobias' physical relationship to his wife is everything but comforting.

The family's best friends, living nearby, move in because they were suddenly frightened of being with themselves, a fear never defined and probably caused by boredom and the feeling of futility, the twin Erinyes of our time. This actually is the theme of the play with the superimposed question of "Am I my brother's keeper?" — translated into the rich-suburban jargon: How far must I go in helping a friend? Albee's answer is: "To hell with you, but you have the right to depend on me."

"A Delicate Balance" is a sick drawing-room comedy, the characters are drawing-room comedy characters, the bar is the point of departure and constant return. The souls of these people are drowned in liquor while the sophisticated dialogue takes the place of crisp potato chips which fall where they are most entertaining. The play is a futility rite danced around the bar as the seat of the liquid god who helps man escape from himself and many a modern dramatist from facing his issues squarely by keeping his characters preoccupied with stage business. The characters dance around the bar on all occasions and at any hour of the day, modern maenads and satyrs, tragic in their comic moments and vice versa. Yes, there is the final question of the delicate balance, a question that rightly bothers Albee. No doubt, the question of how much we mean to each other is meaningful. It becomes less so when answered by people whose meaningfulness in life becomes highly questionable.

The principle of Incarnation, as Christian theology understands it, is the principle of involvement. In Christ, we believe, God involved himself totally in our human predicament. How, then, with regard to our own selves and psychic make-up, can we refuse to do the same?

The Great and Mighty Wonder

By JOHN STRIETELMEIER
Managing Editor

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
—Saint Matthew 5:8

Inevitably there will be a newspaper story this month about some Christian parson who, seeing millions of cheerful unbelievers enjoying the lights and the tinsel and the good fellowship that have become associated with Christmas, will either denounce the whole thing as a vulgarization and profanation of the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord or will suggest that we who belong to the Inner Circle ought to ignore all of this December madness and quietly celebrate the Incarnation, perhaps with a retreat, in June.

One can see the parson’s point. Somebody ought to protest the deliberate creation of a milieu which allows “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” to drown out that still, small voice which, at other seasons of the year, warns us that some sharpie is about to con us into buying something that we don’t need, don’t really want, and certainly can’t afford. The Son of God did not come down from Heaven and become incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary so that discount houses and supermarkets could have one more grand go at clearing their inventories before the end of the year. But neither did He come so that we of the Inner Circle might have a godly reason for pouting because folks from the wrong side of the spiritual tracks are horsing around with Our Festivals.

There is a sense in which Christmas belongs to anyone who is willing to celebrate it, for the God “Who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all” freely gave, with Him, all good things. If color and music and gaiety and laughter and human warmth and good-fellowship are, in any sense, good, they are, in some sense, of God. And we do not condemn our children for enjoying Winnie the Pooh because they have not yet learned to enjoy The Republic.

Indeed, at its best, the Church has always been a great one for slaughtering fatted calves and having a party. One reason why some of the most “Christian” countries of the world are also “backward” countries (in terms of G.N.P., scarcity of bathrooms per thousand population, and relatively low incidence of such diseases as duodenal ulcer, coronary thrombosis, and hypertension) is that their people always seem to be celebrating some festival or other and it is almost impossible to tie them down to an assembly line or a fixed working week. Never having been told that “life is real, life is earnest” (a view of life recommended by a second-rate Unitarian poet), the simple Christian people of these lands are inclined to see life as a bit of this and a bit of that—a mixture of laughter and tears, of work and play, of loving and losing, of light and shadow—intelligible enough, no doubt, to God, but essentially mysterious to those who, at the moment, are involved in the brief business of living it.

I am not trying to push some baptized version of Rousseau’s noble savage as the prototype of the Christian man. I am merely suggesting that we are entitled to view with a certain amount of suspicion any admonition or exhortation which would have the effect of making life less, rather than more, abundant. And I would include in this category of things to be viewed with suspicion any suggestion that God is anti-fun. God is anti-sin, but that is quite another matter.

What we are entitled to tell the cheerful unbelievers at this happy season of the year is that “they ain’t seen nothin’ yet,” that beyond the tinsel and the lights and the flushed and happy faces there is God—and please, now, not the God Whom devil, world, and flesh have been whispering lies about ever since the first man decided that he wanted to be his own god, but the God Who told the truth—what St. Paul calls The Secret—about Himself in Jesus Christ.

This truth—the mystery hidden from the ages but now revealed in Jesus Christ—is that God loves men, and because He loves them, welcomes their company. The Old Testament writer had wondered whether a man could see God and live. God’s answer in Jesus Christ is Yes! Now of course this does not mean that we can focus our eyes upon some particular object and pick up light waves which will excite certain nerves or whatever they are in our eyes. After all, God is spirit. Nor does it mean that the Ground of Being can be reduced to demonstrable theological propositions. He remains the Creator and we remain His creatures. But having said these things, we must still assert that God is see-able. In the Beatitude, our Lord says simply and bluntly that the pure in heart will see God. This was at the very beginning of His earthly ministry. At the very end of His ministry He was of the same mind: “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”

So what is it that we see when we see God? It is what we see in Jesus Christ, and that is pure love—a love so pure, so reckless, so utterly committed to our good, so determined that we shall become all that man is capable of becoming that it will not let us go. It is a love which is prepared to be mistaken for wrath and anger, to be refused and resisted, but which still will not let us go. It is a love which is willing to bear with our sins, and even with our piety, but which still will not let us go. It
is a love which is quite prepared to pulverize us, if it must, to make us what we can become, but which will not let us go.

Jesus calls those who have thus seen God "blessed" or "happy." "Some blessedness!" we are inclined to say, "Some happiness!" For, despite all of our bleating about how nobody loves us and how we wish somebody did, the last thing in the world we really want is real love. What we really want is coddling, if we can get it, and if not coddling, then at least being let alone. But love—the real thing about which St. John was talking when he said that "God is Love"—is not the vague, diffuse, and genial goodwill which an aging playboy may bear toward his assorted bastards. It is the hard, costly, stubborn, gutsy, creative involvement of a father in the whole life and thought of a dearly-loved son. And to the workings of this kind of love the only response that flesh and blood can honestly make is, more often than not, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

"This," some of our unbelieving friends are sure to say, "is nothing but playing with words. You let this Mean Old Man do anything He likes and then you call it love. He gives you the back of His hand and you call yourself blessed. Who you trying to kid?"

We can perhaps most readily clear ourselves of the charge of speaking with a forked tongue about this love if we call to the stand those who might have most reason to be bitter about the way things went for them in this life. Here, then, is Paul: "I count these things (scourgings, stonings, shipwrecks, imprisonments, betrayals, and so forth) but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in Him." Here is Polycarp, spurning the offer of a Roman judge to spare his life if he would deny Christ: "Eighty-six years I have served Him, and he has done me no harm." Now multiply these voices by thousands and tens of thousands until you have the whole choir of saints and apostles and prophets and martyrs. And to the question, "Was it love that directed your lives and appointed your deaths?" the answer is a mighty, resounding, "Yes!" You can explain these witnesses away any way you like—as masochists, as whistlers-in-the-dark, as nuts, as experts at autosuggestion—but you still have to grant that, at the end of an agonizing process of destruction and reconstruction, they considered themselves proper objects not of pity but of envy. They had seen God. They had seen love.

This is the love that we celebrate at Christmas time, the Love that became flesh in Jesus Christ. If we do not see it, we must look, not to anything in God that withholds the vision from us, but to the condition of our own hearts. The pure in heart will see God. If we do not see Him, it is because we are not pure in heart: it is because there is still something in us which does not really want to see him. Our remedy is to go to Bethlehem and see the things that came to pass there, to hear the glad tidings of great joy, to touch the Word of Life. Is it really love that we want? Well, here it is in all of its vulnerability, lying in a manger. Take it (It's yours if you will have it) or leave it (Love that cannot be refused is not love), but never again blame God for that aching void in your life which He is literally dying to fill.

On Second Thought

By ROBERT J. HOYER

God who loved the world was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not counting trespasses. If God so loved us, we ought to love one another. Not to make one another worthy of love. Not to make ourselves deserving of love. Love means joy in things as they are! That is the Christian objective. Every attempt to make them different destroys joy.

If someone is not what I think he ought to be, then I am wrong. I cannot manipulate. I cannot afford to change men—not because they cannot be better than they are, but because I am not wise enough to know the better, because I have no power to change them, and because love is the only force of change. If a man needs changing, it is because he has no joy in things as they are. How could I call him to joy by condemning what is, in him?

Love one another means do not reject what is. Clods are clods to be loved. A sinner is a sinner—to be loved. Negroes are people and whites are nothing more. Communists are sincere. There is wealth in the world but not in mine, and both of these facts are right.

Love one another means do not pretend. I must be loved, and not my mask. I cannot love what I cannot know. If I separate myself from the thief who has tried to change what is, I have pretended that I am not what I am. There is no difference, for all have sinned.

Love one another means do not covet. I must accept myself where I am, with my place to lay my head. It also means do not worry about tomorrow, joy in what will be. I can afford to share all I have without fear. It has pleased God who loves to give His children the kingdom.

Joy in things as they are is possible because God is among us, working in what is. Jesus lives. Joy in things as they are does not mean being glad that I am what I am, that others are what they are. It means joy that being what we are we have been visited and redeemed by God.

There is hope for joy, because God gives it. It may even be that I—frustrated, inhibited, confused and afraid—will learn to know the joy that is our aim. It may even be that joy in Jesus Christ will overcome my fear of what might be.
Samuel Quickelberg was a Flemish physician and intellectual of the sixteenth century. Like other humanists of that century he was stirred by the reborn knowledge of ancient Greek language and literature to an enthusiasm for the life of this world. In the manner of all enthusiasts, he disdained his civilization’s immediate past—medieval, barbaric, Gothic—and plunged into a study of things human. For him, as for Alexander Pope, the proper study of mankind was man. While attached to the court of Albert V in Munich at mid-century, Quickelberg found reason to write a commentary on the miniatures illustrating a manuscript of psalms by the Bavarian court composer, Orlando di Lasso, and in his commentary to include some reference to the music of these motets:

Orlando has expressed the content of the songs so aptly with lamenting and plaintive melody, suit ing the music to the meaning of the words, expressing the power of each different emotion, making the things of the text so vivid that they seem to stand actually before our eyes, that one cannot know whether it is the sweetness of the emotions that adorns the melodies or the plaintive melodies the emotions. This kind of music is called musica reservata.

The meaning of musica reservata is not clear. Though the term is used after 1550 to indicate a special way of composing, the musical techniques employed are never fully described. What is clear in Quickelberg’s commentary and in others of the time is the novelty of “suiting the music to the meaning of the words.” All sources betray excitement over a new way of making music. It is hailed as the style which “will become still more the fashion than heretofore” when it is better known, the style better cultivated in the homes of connoisseurs than performed in public places lest it fail to please by being too new.

The compositions of the later sixteenth century are marked by harmonies so bold and melodic progressions and rhythmic devices so adventurous that one is led to compare them with the innovations of the New Music from the beginning of our own century. The intense chromaticism of Marenzio’s madrigals must have startled the ears of sixteenth century audiences much as the primitivism of Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring outraged the Paris audience of 1913. But reservata is more than a change in artistic fashion, a stylistic revolution. Quickelberg’s claim for di Lasso’s music is that it is expressive. How very remarkable! Music becomes noteworthy because it is expressive and modern because it wed sound and emotion. Are we to infer that music before this time was inexpressive? If expressivity is emotional evocation or the creation of feeling, yes. On this point the medieval musician and the modern part company. Sixteenth century Humanism gave a new direction to music; the art of sound thereafter aimed to capture in tones the emotional experience of the composer and by the performance of those tones to recreate in the listener that experience. Before that time music had other intentions.

It was not for any ability to express feeling that music was included (with arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy) in the quadrivium, the higher of the seven liberal arts studied in medieval universities. It was the mathematical nature of musical science that the ancient intellect esteemed. Musica was the study of combining sounds and made no distinction between poetry and music. The phenomena of meter, accent, and intonation were the concern of the musician and the craft of combining these elements into patterns and structures inherently beautiful was as much an activity of mathematical thought as arithmetic, geometry, or astronomy. Augustine recognized this. In his essay on aesthetics, De musica, he locates beauty in the "numericalness" (numerostias) of poetry and music. In the Middle Ages a composer was successful or not depending on the beauties he created by manipulating skillfully the meters and accents of the poetry and music. Frequently poems and the music to which they were sung were created by the same person. Guillaume de Machaut was highly regarded for his poetry by Chaucer, who translated several poems, and for his music by French and Italian musicians of his day. Whenever a musician prepared music for a pre-existent poem, the listener was led to imagine that both words and tune were the fruit of a single imagination.

The modern concept that music is an expressive art was born when the technical mastery of the medieval musician was joined to the Humanist’s concern with sensory perception. The intricate and cunningly crafted madrigals of Italy and England were the first forms of musical expressivity. The opera, that most dramatic of musical forms, was the inevitable realization of emotions expressed through music. Instrumental music did not become independent of vocal forms until the late sixteenth century when the expressive potential of wordless sound became meaningful by itself. The rationalism of eighteenth century Classicism never questioned the premise that music is an art that expresses feelings. The nineteenth century realized most fully the affective powers of music or perhaps it remains for the expressionism of our day to achieve this distinction.

(continued next month)
"Look at a ray of sun... the quietest of the silent strengths, it speeds more than 300 kilometers in a second... behold our starry firmament, who hears it..." Naum Gabo, The Realist Manifesto, 1920

"To feel what we know and know what we feel is one of the tasks of our generation." Laszlo Moholy-Nagy

It is a difficult task in our time to integrate our experiences of rational knowledge, profound emotion, aesthetic responsiveness, and religious commitment. During the last presidential election Walter Lippmann wrote an article in which he quoted both Johnson and Goldwater as deploring the unwillingness or inability of much of the population to recognize and deal with the unique features of the twentieth century. For instance, science and technology dramatically shape our lives and shrink our world. Witness the spectacular development of atomic energy, space rocketry, and electronic computers and communications. Yet much of science's rationalistic base remains alien and remote to our feelings and incomprehensible to our everyday common sense experience.

Today’s physicist no longer constructs an image of the world that is anthropomorphic or mechanistic, but rather an image of an organic world of space and energy. Instead of the atom being made up of relatively permanent solid materials, the physicist calculates that the atomic particles, such as electrons, protons, and neutrons, are vibrating points of energy whose movements can only be predicted statistically and whose mass is so slight that the total volume of the atom is mostly empty space. From this point of view a chair, a face, and even the galaxies are virtually immaterial lines or "fields of force" in a curved space.

The art of constructivism is an effort to make this world of space and energy available to our senses and feeling; to give a poetic and positive reaction to this world; to give it a positive desirable image, an image that can give us an idea of what this world could be... an image of the world that encourages us to take heart and construct our civilization towards the perfection and the harmony suggested by the image. Without these models, these forms to humanize and make us at home and in tune with, or at one with, the images of science, the possibilities of our times may not be so clear. These images are meant to enlarge our consciousness of the nature of space, light, and "fields of force."

Naum Gabo, the leading artist in constructivism, studied physics, chemistry, mathematics, engineering, and art history at the University in Munich from 1909-12. Among the many famous men teaching there at that time were Roentgen, the inventor of X-ray, and Woelflin.
who developed a formalistic classification in art history. During his studies, the construction of transparent three-dimensional models of mathematical formulas influenced Gabo to start making three-dimensional sculptural reliefs.

From 1917-22 Naum and his brother Antoine Pevsner lived in Russia, their homeland. It was during those revolutionary days of feverish discussion and work regarding the place of art in society and how the artist could help construct a new society that Gabo's constructivist ideas were formed.

The immaterial quality to the transparent plastic in *Spiral Theme* and in *Linear Construction* shapes space without obstructing it. The edges of the plastic catch the light suggesting finely racing curved lines of force rather than of mass. Although the basic shapes are very stable, such as the spiral or the inverted symmetries of *Linear Construction* and even of *Bird in Flight*, the variations within the forms, the curves, the gestures, and the progressions of lines give the pieces a great deal of control and vigor, an exultant spirit rising out of crystalline perfection. Such impersonal models of perfection, such constructive non-representational images were always intended to function as a public art; to be placed in conjunction with buildings. Therefore it has often seemed to me that the approach of "the art of pure form" such as that of the constructivists, in the hands of a talented, committed Christian artist could result in an objective art for corporate worship effectively helping to bring together corporate faith, feeling, knowledge, and senses into a unified expression enlarging everyone's consciousness of the faith.

**HOLY TRINITY**, Richard Lippold, Retro-choir, Chapel Portsmouth Priory School, Portsmouth, Rhode Island

In the introduction to the 1966 edition of the Lutherjahrbuch (the annual for international Luther research) the editor, Franz Lau, points out that during the last thirty years Luther research developed in America independently of the Continent, and that this American research is producing more and more outstanding results. This book by Heinz Bluhm no doubt will have to be counted as one of the finest contributions American scholarship has made to Luther research; the point of departure, the method, and the results of the work done by the well-known Yale Germanist may not be by-passed by anyone who studies Luther, be he philologist, historian, or theologian.

Bluhm concentrates on Luther, the translator of the Bible: "Luther's German Bible is a famous book, a classic not only of German but of world literature" (p. vii). Although Luther was "indebted to what has been called the language of the German Bible tradition, his rendering is essentially the product of his own genius" (p. viii). Notwithstanding the fact that the eminence of Luther's Bible translation is universally recognized, "the real [i.e., the aesthetic and philological] nature of Luther's German Bible is still largely unexplored and uncomprehended." (p. viii) though some fine work has been done in this field, "we still have no real idea what Martin Luther accomplished..." (p. viii).

The author's starting point is, then, his questioning of the nature of Luther's Bible translation, his search for a better understanding of this religious and literary masterpiece, and his desire to gain a full appreciation of the linguistic qualities of Luther's work. How and why did Luther arrive at a particular translation? And what is the linguistic quality of this particular translation? Rather than indulging in generalities perhaps supported by quotations torn out of context, the author selects certain Scripture passages and scrutinizes them philologically, comparing Luther's translation with the text in the biblical original and in the various translations which could have been, or actually were, available to the Reformer.

The results of this undertaking are several essays on a number of Bible passages for which Luther's translation is the terminus ad quem. Although Luther was indebted to the translation and interpretation tradition, nevertheless Bluhm clearly demonstrates that at decisive points the Reformer's translation was produced by his linguistic genius. Luther was a master of idiomatic phrases; he was well able to Germanize the biblical texts, and to express linguistically rough passages in an aesthetically pleasing way. The author also investigates Luther's understanding of the task of a Bible translator, as well as the Reformer's own evaluation of his linguistic masterpiece. And finally, the author focuses on the relationship of the Luther Bible to the English Bible. 4

Martin Luther: Creative Translator is, then, not a single unit but a collection of independent, more or less unrelated highly critical and informative essays, the result of much painstaking research (or Kleinarbeit, as the author so exactly labels it). "No one can be more painfully conscious of their [i.e., the essays'] fragmentariness than the author" (p. ix). Although modesty prevents the author from valuing the results of his work highly enough (or perhaps he is too careful a scholar to view his work differently), it has to be pointed out that, notwithstanding the "fragmentariness" of his work, Bluhm has laid the ground for a new approach to the investigation of the Luther Bible, and his work may by no means be considered "preliminary" (p. x). It has been said that with statistics one can prove almost everything; it is to the great credit of the author that he does not bore the reader with statistics. Behind his carefully formulated judgments, however, lies solid quantitative analysis of an abundance of evidence which could perhaps have permitted the author to speak, in some cases, more definitely than he has chosen to do.

Anyone who has ever done any translating knows at least some of the difficulties involved in such a task, difficulties which are lessened only to a minor degree by modern philological tools. Anyone who has done any translating of Luther's writings, or the writings of any "old" author, is most familiar with the sometimes insurmountable difficulties, for which only too often modern tools are of little help. How much more difficult must have been the task of translating the Bible in Luther's time! One of the author's purposes is to lead the reader into Luther's study, enabling him to watch the Reformer at work. The author is highly successful in reaching this goal. Only the reader who is willing to share in the philological Kleinarbeit and cope with much German, Latin, Greek, and some Hebrew will be able to follow the author. If the reader is patient enough to do this, however — and the author's fresh and clear way of presenting the "dry" material certainly helps the reader here — he will discover a new thought on each page, even in each paragraph. These essays are a well-spring of information and of carefully weighed and formulated observations; they are highly stimulating, and clearly show what still must be done in this field. Some remarks on this latter point might well be added here.

The author does not mark Luther's position in the history of the German language; he does not address himself to the problem whether Luther "created" the "modern" German language, or "only adopted" a particular dialect and "popularized" it. What is the place of Luther the linguist in the history of the German language and literature? Perhaps the author considers this problem sufficiently resolved, or perhaps he plans to address himself to it at greater length. But it was somewhat surprising to this reader not to find this problem mentioned in a work which deals with Luther's translation of the Bible into the German language.

Further, the author does not do justice to the "Bible Translation Commission," that is, to Luther's friends who contributed to the Bible translation. Luther was "one of the supreme literary geniuses" (p. vii), true, but he also drew on the "literary genius" of his co-workers. What information might be gained about the contributions made by these men to the Luther Bible? The author also understated the importance of Faber Stapulensis for Luther's work. Since the French Humanist decidedly influenced Luther's exegetical work, the question arises as to the degree of his influence on Luther's translating work. If Faber had no direct bearing on Luther's translating — and this may very well be the case — then this should be established.

In an attempt to present the difference between the translation of the Christmas pericopes in the Wartburg Postill and in the Septembertestament (1522), the author analyzes these pericopes in chapter 2. He concentrates, however, on the translations of the texts with which Luther begins his expositions in the Postill. What could be learned for the topic under discussion from the paraphrases and explanations of the texts, which can be found throughout the expositions themselves? 5 The author's overall goal is to portray Luther as a creative translator. In some cases he explains the "why of a specific version in Luther's translation with the Reformer's linguistic creativity and literary genius, from whose inexhaustible depth the living language sprouted, and who shaped his masterpiece through careful work. No one who is at home in the German language will doubt Luther's linguistic genius. The theologian cannot in all cases be satisfied, however, with an aesthetically-oriented explanation of Luther's translations. As philologist, the author is not, of course, charged with making theological observations. But, as the author has demonstrated beyond doubt in the second part of his book, Luther did not translate for the sake of translating, but for the sake of theological concerns. Consequently the theologian has to probe more deeply before he can answer the "why of a specific translation. Two examples will illustrate this.

After a most extensive analysis of his evidence in chapters one through three, the au-
thor very carefully makes the following obser-vation: between 1517 and 1521, when Lu-

ther in his German writings was quoting Mat-thew, he apparently leaned quite heavily on

the Vulgate text; he translated it into German,
sometimes verbatim, sometimes freely. Be-
sides pointing to Luther's linguistic abilities,
the author has no further explanation for this

startling observation; and startling it is in-deed for all who are accustomed to assume
that since the latter days of his lecture on Ro-

mans Luther had adopted the Erasmian Greek
text of the New Testament as basis for his
work. The explanation for this situation which
first comes to mind, and of which the author
is also conscious, is the fact that the Re-

former apparently did not check his New
Testament but, remembering the Vulgate
text, quoted and translated from memory.
This is the simplest explanation, and will
probably suffice in many cases. On the other
hand, it may be an oversimplification. It
seems to this writer that Luther's procedure
has to be viewed against the background of
the Reformer's theological, or more specific-
ally, pastoral concerns. When writing in Ger-
man, Luther was aiming at the laity; for his
translations he used the Vulgate text, that
text which he could hope was familiar to all
the people, either directly (through pre-Luther
German Bible translations) or indirectly
(through the worship-life of the church). The
translations from the Vulgate were to function
as the familiar guide-posts by which the Re-
former wanted to lead his readers to the fron-
tier of his thought. Wilhelm Maurer has
demonstrated the interrelationships of Lu-
ther's academic and pastoral work, of the Re-
former's theology for students, scholars, and
priests, and for the laity.8 If the material set
forth by Bluhm is approached from this the-
ological, pastoral point of view, then it stron-
gly reflects Luther's pastoral concerns and be-
comes a major contribution to his "lay-theo-
logy." The philological analysis and the aes-
thetic considerations alone do not throw the
proper light on the evidence made available
by the author.

This observation is underscored if one con-
siders Luther's translation of Psalm 23: 3b.9

RSV: "He leads me in paths of righteous-

ness."

KJV: "He leadeth me in the paths of right-

eousness."

Luther's version in several stages:
"Er fueret mich auff rechttem pfad."9
"Er fueret mich auff rechtem pfad."9
Pre-Luther German Bible translations
(analyzed by Bluhm):
"Er fueret mich aus auf [or: "an"] die steig [
or: "wech"] der gerechtet [or: "rechterdichacht"] ."9
Vulgate: "Deduxit me super semitas

iustitiae."

LXX: "ODEGESEN Me epi tribous diacono-
synes."9

Hebrew text: "Yancheni bemagele-tesdeq."9

A comparison of these versions makes clear
that Luther's text is quite different from the

other versions; the Reformer obviously went

his own way when translating this passage.
How can this be explained?

Bluhm makes the following observation:
"Among the best examples of how he [Luther]
achieved excellence by a free rendering are
verses three and four. In the third verse there
is the line: 'er fueret mich auff rechttem pfad.'9
Luther here substitutes an adjectival con-
struc-tion, 'auff rechttem pfad.' for what would
be literally 'Pfad der Gerechtigkeit.' ... It is
hard to conceive of a translation of these phrases
reading more like an original German com-
position. They are thoroughly and delightfully
idiomatic." (p. 109; italics by this writer).
Bluhm explains Luther's translation exclu-

sively on the basis of aesthetic considerations.
Regarding the source from which Luther
translated, Bluhm points out that "Luther's
rendering is based on the Hebrew original as
he [Luther] understood it with the aid of the
Christian scholarship of his day." "No matter
how conscientiously he tried to base his ren-
dering verse by verse ... on the Hebrew text;
no matter how religiously he abandoned a
long-accustomed word when its Vulgate form
did not check with the original; the fact re-
mains that Luther's rendering as a whole is
still tinged with the spirit of the Septuagint
and of the Vulgate. ... Luther changed many
details but retained, mostly unconsciously,
the whole religious and spiritual tenor of the
highly influential versions that had regn-

ed supreme for more than a thousand years" (p.
106; italics by this writer).

If Luther used the Hebrew text as basis for
his translation, and there is not the slightest
reason to doubt this, then his rendering was
due not to aesthetic considerations but —
and this certainly was the decisive factor — to
philological considerations. In a genitive con-
struction "tesdeq" can have an adjectival
rather than a substantival meaning,10 and
Luther apparently knew this.11 Consequently
his translation is not as free as Bluhm sug-
gests, and as it might appear at first glance.
To the contrary, it is quite literal if one dis-
regards the change in "bemagele" from the
plural to the singular. That Luther's (almost)
literal rendering sounds beautiful is only a
bonus, and documents the linguistic genius
of the translator.

As the author so convincingly argues at
another point, "Luther's highest set of values
[in translating] was not aesthetic or literary
but definitely a set of high-theological, theo-

logical and religious" (p. 123). If this principle
is applied to the passage under discussion, then
it becomes even more clear that aesthetic con-
siderations alone cannot explain the Refor-
mer's version, as Bluhm suggests. Which theo-

dological or religious concerns could have been
involved for Luther when he translated Ps.
23: 3b? In order to find a possible answer to
this question, we have to turn first briefly to
the Psalm itself.

The author of this psalm wrote it in the
conviction, drawn from experience, that
Jahweh has revealed himself, has acted in
history, and was dealing with the individual

Israelite and the whole people of Israel as a

good shepherd would deal with his flock, or

a gracious host with his honored guests.12

For his name's sake Jahweh leads the faithful
on that path which he considers to be the
right one, even if this means that the faithful
have to walk through the dark valley.13 It is
the right path on which Jahweh leads the
faithful because in so doing Jahweh acts ac-


cording to his righteousness, revealing his
very self as the God of the Covenant. And so
the right path of (God's) righteousness is the
path of the Heilsgeschichte which Jahweh
had enacted once, and will be enacting with
his people in general, and with the au-
thor of the Psalm in particular. Jahweh's rod
and staff are the assuring and comforting
symbols of his past, present and future pre-

ence with his people. Past experience and
courageous hope for the future are interwo-

en in the confession of faith in the God of the
Covenant,14 whose righteousness is revealed
by leading his people in the right way. The
key words for this Psalm are election, guid-
ance, experience, and faith in spite of the
dark valley. For the author of this Psalm
there was no difference between the "right
path" and the "path of righteousness": both
were one in the God of the Covenant.

At the time Luther concentrated on Psalm
23 it was of course interpreted in the light of
the relationship of Christ to the church and to
the individual believer. This fact seems to
have no impact on the problem under discus-

sion. Important, however, is the fact that a
major shift in the understanding of the Psalm
had developed. This shift was predominantly
connected with the interpretation of verses
2b, 3a, 3b (and also 4c).16

The Vulgate translated these three pas-
sages: ... super aquam refectionis educavit
me, animam meam convertit, deduxit me super
semitas iustitiae.

In the traditional pre-Luther exegesis,17
—and Luther was thoroughly familiar with it19
—verse 2b was understood as the Christian's
educational process, in which faith20 (which
began with Baptism, or the proclamation of
the Gospel, or of the word of the divine wis-
dom)21 is nourished and finally culminates
in the perfect evangelical life of the sanctified
and just man. In this process of growing up
in faith (or of education, or reformation)22
the function of Baptism,23 important though it
may be all by itself, is augmented by the graces24
which Christ bestows upon the faithful.
The center of interest is thus shifted from
Baptism to the "walking of the Christian"25
in Christ's perfect law (praecepta evangelii
or charitatis, mandata institutae, consilia evan-
elicae),26 by which the gradual sanctification
of the Christian should be effected.27 This
process leads the Christian over the narrow
"path of righteousness", trod only by few and
just people,28 this path is much harder to fol-

low than the broad ways of the world, or the
ways prescribed by Old Testament law.29
The "path of righteousness" is the way on
which the Christian, guided and taught by the
divine wisdom, or the ways of righteousness.30

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and divinely disciplined by God's rod and staff,31 walks from one level of faith to another, from one stage of integrity to another, from a first insight into the divine will to a deeper one, until he reaches his heavenly home (the conversation with the Father).32 Where the perfectly sanctified Christian will be one with God forever.33 The fact that in connection with verse 3c ("for his name's sake") it is repeatedly underscored that this whole process is not due to man's merit, but to God's grace,34 even exclusively to God's grace,35 did not cause Luther to assume that the understanding of "iusitia" as the traditional exegesis36 had developed it in the context of this Psalm was identical with that expressed by the faithful Israelite in Psalm 23. As early as in the Dicata super Psalterium (1513-1515)37 Luther had pointed out that "iusitia" in this passage does not mean what Aristotle in Book V of the Nicomachean Ethics "vel iurisperiti," suggest this term to mean.38 It is not. "Iusitia" is for Luther identical with "fides et iustitia," even exclusively to God's grace,39 because it is iustitia "fidei et coram Deo," propter nomen tuum, ut glorificetur, non propter meritum meum.40 Faith, on the other hand, is the gift of God. "Gratis enim datur gratia, id est, fides et iustitia, id etatis augeret et deducitur, ut non superbiatur homo sed glorificetur Deus."41 Contrary to the traditional exegesis, Luther understands 'Faith' at this point not as an educational, nourishing, disci­plinary process of sanctification, culminating in the perfect evangelical life, but as fiducia in God and his word of promise, especially in view of Anfechtung, death, and judgment.42 Verse 4b is for Luther the most noble verse of the whole Psalm and "perfectae gratiae vox."43 God is with the individual through his word and sacrament. This word is God's power to salvation — Luther quotes Romans 1:16 — for all who believe; and through this word Christ lives in the hearts of the believer. "Ideo dicit: Tu mecum es, scilicet, quia virga tua, id est, verbum tuum consolatibus, ut non timeam malum etiam in morte . . . ."44 This presence of God through the power of the gospel (the word of grace),45 is the foundation of the fiducia. "Nihil enim praeter verbum habemus et promissionem de Deo, donec eum perducamus. Quare qui nihil nisi Christum in morte cogitandum didicit, intelligit hoc ipsum verbum et promissum Christi esse.46 In Luther's interpretation Psalm 23 regained its theocentric character, which had become somewhat blurred in the traditional exegesis. God and his action in Christ, effect­ed in man through God's word as fides or gratia iustificans,47 on the one hand, and the courageous fiducia of the individual on the other hand, were for Luther the centers of this Psalm. And these centers were the theological issues involved in the translation of verse 3b.48 Through the traditional exegesis and piety, and especially through Luther's struggle with the latter, the term "semitta iustitiae" of the Vulgate, and its equivalents in the pre-­Luther German Bibles, apparently had become tremendously disturbing to Luther. The term was for him too much 'tinged' with "the whole religious and spiritual tenor" of the past to be comfortably adopted as the basis for his translation.50 In using "auf rechter Strasse", Luther changed what may seem only a detail,51 but in so doing he turned against the whole religious system. And in this system of the past the Old Testament bemegale­tstedeq had been understood as the "semitta iustitiae", the ways of the consilium, leading the Christian to righteousness and sanctification; a moralistic, disciplinary, anthropocentric­tic trend had replaced the theocentric charac­ter of the Old Testament term. On the other hand, Luther had come to understand "iusitia" in the light of the gospel, and Psalm 23 was for him gospel.52 Because this gospel­character of Psalm 23 had become blurred in the traditional exegesis and piety, which had been based on the Vulgate's "semitta iustitiae" and its equivalents in the pre-Luther German Bibles, Luther, in translating this passage, went his own way. Because Luther could base his "auf rechter Strasse" on Hebrew text, and because a departure from the translation tradition meant theological soundness, he felt justified and compelled to depart from this tradition. With his "auf rechter Strasse" Luther recaptured some of the original meaning of the Psalm.53 God guides the individual in the right path through the ministerium verbi; God considers it to be the right one because it is a path according to his righteous­ness (which for Luther was manifest in Jesus Christ) and leads home to the Father's heart.54 Theological and philological reasons explain Luther's translation of Psalm 23:3b, rather than aesthetic reasons, as Bluhm sug­gests. Bluhm is right, however, when he points out that Luther's translation is "thor­oughly and delightfully idiomatic," and reads like an original German composition.55 But this linguistic value can be considered only roughly and delightfully, and not exclusively to God's grace,56 because it is not due to man's merit, but to God's grace,57 and its equivalents in the pre-Luther German Bibles, apparently had become tremendously disturbing to Luther. The

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3. Whether or not the author always properly evaluates the older contributions to the investigation of Luther's German Bible has to remain an open question. With the exception of chap­ter 3, Bluhm's work, as for as this reader is concerned, presents little dialogue with the work of other scholars. On the other hand, Bluhm is correct when he continually under­scores the fact that the Luther Bible is to a large degree still uncharted territory.
4. Luther divided his German Bible into three major parts: Part I: "The Maker of a Translator" (pp. 3-113); Part II: "Interpreting the Translator's Task" (pp. 117-166); Part III: "Shaping the English Bible" (pp. 169-232).
5. Chapter 1, Bluhm investigates Luther's translation of all the passages taken from Matthew which can be found in the Reformer's writings prior to the Septembertestament of 1522, and compares them with this "official" version of 1522, as well as with the translation tradition. In chapter 2, Matt. 16:13-19 is analysed. This was the text of the sermon delivered by Luther on June 29, 1519, in Leipzig; Luther translated the text and prefixed it to his edition of this sermon.
6. One of the great losses for Luther research is the autograph of the 1522 New Testament trans­lation which most unfortunately is no longer extant. To somewhat compensate for this loss, it has been assumed that the translated portions in the Wartburg Postel (compiled by Lu­ther in 1521/22) could be considered the Grund­stock, i.e., parts of a very first draft of the Septembertestament. In chapter 3, Bluhm scrutinizes this theory and proves that it cannot be as flatly maintained as has been as­sumed. In chapter 4, the author analyzes the emerging and final version of Luther's transla­tion of Ps. 23. In the second major part the author in two chapters (Chapter 5: "Responsible Freedom: The Book of Psalms," pp. 251-307; Chapter 6: "The Original Intent and the Modern Idiom") deals with Luther's understanding of the task of translating in general, and with the Reformer's understanding of his own task and of his own Bible translation in particular. Of special impor­tance to the theologian is the fact that in this part he is introduced to the value which Luther assigned to his German Bible, and to the Reformer's reason for adding "alone" in the translation of Romans 3:28. (A knowledge of the value and importance which Luther assigned to his translation should in the future, prevent the unseas­sonal which disturbs some congrega­tions, Lutherans as well as others, each time that a new Bible translation appears on the mar­ket. The uproar that went through some Prote­stant congregations when the position of the ob­viously "inspired" and therefore "unerr­ing" KJV was jeopardized by the REv or the NIV cannot be justified with a "Lutheran" view of Scripture and Scripture translation.) With Part III the author enters the investigation of the English Bible. In chapter 7 he shows the rela­tionship of Luther's translation to that of Tyndal­le and that of the English Bible. The reader can find the detailed reviews of the English Bible in this chapter. In chapter 8 he analyzes the Coverdale translation of Ps. 23 and of Galatians, and in chapter 9 he focuses on the

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KJV of Ps. 26: 8 and 45: 13, contrasting these passages to the translation tradition, especially the LXX.


6. Being somewhat familiar with Luther's correspondence, this reader could not totally agree with the author's unqualified statement that Luther's Bible translation is "definitely the work of a single man" (p. viii, emphasis by this writer).


10. See e.g., Luther's translation of Lev. 19: 26, 25: 15, Ex. 34: 10, Jer. 31: 6. In these passages, LXX uses the adjective meaning for the word in a genitive construction. A copy of Reuchlin's work on the Hebrew language, which was the source of Luther's knowledge, could not have been checked by this writer at this time; thus it could not be verified beyond doubt to what degree Luther had to be aware of this adjectival meaning of "teaching" in a genitive construction.


15. RBV: "He was beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness..."...thy rod and thy staff, thine esteemed path." (Ps. 23: 1-3c)

16. The meaning of "education" is not clear. On the one hand, education and educare are used in Medieval Latin as synonyms; on the other hand, the meaning of educare has such a wide range that an exact meaning is difficult to establish; see Ducange, Glossarium medicum et infimae Latinitatis (Paris, 1840), I, etc., educare. Apparently the translator of the Vulgate had in mind to express with educare the process of nourishing and bringing up; this is suggested by LXX as a translation of educare with a similar meaning. The problem for understanding the important fact is not what the Vulgate intended to say with educare, but how the translator of the Vulgate understood it.

17. The following sketch, and it cannot be more than that, is based on: Augustine, Enarrationes in Psalms (Amine, Patrologia, series latina, 38, 1915), 241 ff.; Bede Opera Omnia, XXIII, 369 ff.; Nemesius, "Expositio in Psalmos" (ibid., 70, 167 ff.); Petrus Lombardus (ca. 1100-1160), Commentary in Ps. 13 (ed. de Sacy, 5, 41), 151 ff.; Biblia Latina cum postilla Hugonis de Sancto Cere (ca. 1100-1265) (Basel, 1499 ff., vol. 2; copies of this and of the following works in the Newberry Library Chicago: J. Jonnes de Tarraconae (1388-1468), Expositio Psalmorum (Strasbourg, 1485). Biblia Latina cum Glossa ordinaria, postilla Nicolai de Lyra (ca. 1270-1340) and Paulus Burgensis (ca. 1553-1545) additum (Basel, 1498 ff., vol. 3). Biblia Latina cum Glossa ordinaria (ed. Interlineare Anselmi Ludozannis cited as GL. I.)..." (11117). (Strasbourg, 1481, vol. 2; Jacobus Faber Stapulensis (d. 1556). Quinquagesima Psalterium (Paris, 1513)." See Ebeling and Hahn in note 7; Holt, K., "Luther's Reformation through the Eyes of the "Interlinear" Anselmi Ludozannis..." (1917), 356 ff.; Ebeling, G., "Die Abfassung von Luther's Hymnus", Zeitschrift für Den Deutschen Glaubenskunde (1951), 172 ff.

18. Of the five books which follow, only one in version which Luther apparently prepared in 1516 for publication, a project which never materialized during his life. It would be interesting to compare Luther's theology in the glosses, which apparently were written rather early in the lectures, with that in the expositions, which are available only in the form which Luther prepared for publication after the course was completed. Since the LXX originated with a sketch, and it cannot be more than this, is not concerned with the initia theologiae Lutheri, but with the Reformer's ideas as they are applicable to the problem under discussion, and the particular theological problems of Luther's statements in the Dictate, paraphrased in the following, has to be omitted.

19. WA 31, 1, 466, f. 6

20. ibid., 466, f. 1

21. On this term, which is basic to Luther's theology, see Rupp, G., Die Rechtssicherheit von Gott. Luther's Studies (London, 1952), pp. 81 ff.

22. WA 3, 139, 25 f.

23. WA 31, I, 466, 24 f.

24. ibid., 467, 22 ff.; WA 3, 140, 2 f.

25. WA 31, I, 467, 38 f.

26. ibid., 468, 24 ff. In the glosses, the "rod" and "staff" of 4c are for Luther "verbum...Dei...quo sustinente spongibus..." (Rom. 15:4) WA 3, 140, 29 f.

27. ibid., 468, 36 ff. Luther was therefore convinced that Ps. 23 should be prayed or sung by the church especially for the departed brethren: WA 31, I, 467, 9 f.

28. When discussing the term "Word of God", in connection with his explanation of this Psalm in the Dicata, Luther did not yet detail the diacritical and legal of law, although there are certain phrases which suggest that this concept was emerging; also the christological-sacramental character of the Word of God has not yet been fully developed. The important thing for Luther at that time was to stress the efficacy of the Word of God in relation to the individual's faith as fiducia. See note 45, and WA 3, 140, 3 f.; 31, I, 466, 1 - 21; 469, 5 f.; 471, 4 f.; for the later development see also WA 40, II, 268, 14 f., 282, 29 f. (1536 exposition of this Psalm).

29. In terms of Luther's fully developed theology, the issues would have to be fixed as a struggle to express in the translation of Ps. 23: 3b a "proper" understanding of the relationship of the law to the gospel. For the exegetical tradition there was no basic difference between law and gospel; both were precepts: the semitae lusitiae were the "duo praecepta sollicitur". In the lex et prophetallis eorum (Introduction) to 3c it is found that Ps. 23: 3b is the basis of this interpretation of "semute lusitiae".

30. Thus a picture quite different from that presented by Bluhm (see above) has emerged.

31. One would hardly believe that the author would adopt Bluhm's view expressed in the quotation cited above.

32. A discussion of the hermeneutical presuppositions of this issue for Luther's theology, cannot be undertaken here; for details see Bornkamm, H., Luther und das Alte Testament (Tübingen, 1948).

33. A contrary argument (e.g., Leopold, H. C., Expositions of the Psalms (Columbus, Ohio, 1959), pp. 211 f.) can only stem from a complete lack of understanding of Luther's concept of justitia Dei.

34. See Luther's 1530 exposition of Psalm 23 (WA 31, I, 368, 5 ff.) and his Psalm 23 Exposed (One evening after Grace (WA 40, II, 368, 14 ff.).

35. See above.
For the better part of eight months, Democratic candidates for public office in Porter County, Indiana (the home of The Cresset), have been going up and down the campaign trail.

This campaign trail has been a special kind of Via Dolorosa running through two elections (primary and general) whose stations have been manned by state and county chairmen, Republicans, lack of funds and time, Republicans, bickering among candidates, dwindling supplies of energy, and Republicans.

Particularly agonizing for these Democratic candidates in a Republican county have been the attempts to reach thousands of voters, especially when a candidate knows he needs exposure and cannot get to every voter to introduce himself.

The Porter County Democrats have wrestled this phantom public with political cards, potholders, signs on cars and telephone posts, bumper stickers, radio programs, name-calling, newspaper and radio advertising, house parties, and political rallies. Since the candidates have had no way of knowing which of these approaches and techniques is effective, they used them all as long as time and money held out.

This is the shot-gun technique. The idea is to use all the approaches in the hope that one of them would hit on target.

In all this hectic and frenetic campaigning, there was a singular lack of research and planning. This, as I see the dilemma, has been the reason for all the "shot-gunning."

My experience in politics tells me that the lower one drops on the political hierarchy the more resistance one finds to planning and deliberation, the harder it is to find people who can find time and resources for planning and deliberation.

In the case of Porter County, a county in transition from an agrarian society to a metropolitan complex, some of our political leaders (in both parties) have not yet learned the lessons of living in a pluralistic, heterogeneous community where atheists and Christians, Democrats and Republicans, Birchers and liberals, Caucasians and non-Caucasians must learn to live together. In our county, politicians are still referring to cities as cesspools of corruption and to Democratic city organizations as machines bought and sold by crime syndicates as if their county were not on the brink of becoming urban, as if rural and semi-rural communities were not really living examples of Peyton Place. If they want to refer to mythology, they might keep in mind that all these monkey-shines began in a garden. The rural community is a garden of that sort where people (like all other people anywhere) drink too much, commit adultery, and run rampant over the Ten Commandments.

Moreover, unlike the case of counties I know in other states (Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin), Porter County politicians never get around to discussing salient issues. Porter County, in line with most of Indiana, centers its politics on the pursuit of jobs. In all fairness to the Democratic leaders of Porter County, and certainly in all fairness to the county's candidates, they are willing to stand for the future in terms of a few statements from their platform: "The Democratic Party recognizes the tremendous growth our party will experience in the very near future, and we, the members of that party, pledge that we will not be the last to lay the old aside nor the first to force a radical disarrangement of the community which has nourished and kept us all these years—where our roots run so deeply and so pleasantly. But we must move on."

It is that moving on that hurts, for moving on we run broadside into all the predicaments that bedevil urban communities: crime, juvenile delinquency, poverty, social welfare, horse and buggy local governments who, like the one-hoss shay, are going to bust apart all at once, and a parade of other problems.

We have ministers and members of Christian churches in our communities who still believe that God is white and the devil black. We have citizens in our communities who think all Americans wear white hats while all non-Americans wear black hats.

But there is hope in the pledge of the Porter County Democrats in their platform (and I feel many Republicans are of the same opinion) to work at the hard, moving future: "Democrats will precede all action and policy formation with research, open hearings, and a deliberation that marks our concern for all areas of Porter County—north, south, east, and west."
This column will offer commentary on the mass media—magazines, newspapers, movies, radio, and television. Since the comments found here will be of a rather special sort, it seems good that I offer a rationale for the kind of thing I propose to say in this space every month. I regret to say that my rationale is, on the whole, unsurprising; it consists of the affirmation of two obvious facts, together with the specification of some of the implications involved in asserting these facts.

First: Media are means. As such, they must have ends. Furthermore, means, like ends, are things persons choose. In commenting, then, on the mass media, I will try to note the ends served by the media; and I will try to identify the persons responsible for the use of these means and the selection of those ends.

Casuists among us will be quick to note that it is sometimes appropriate to ask whether the end justifies the means. One needn’t watch *Supermarket Sweep* long to become a casuist of that order. This program, which amounts to a glorification of gluttony, is one of daytime TV’s entertainment plums. Just as Joyboy’s mother in *The Loved One* made the ingestion of food a study in vulgarity, so this program makes the purchase of food an exercise in obscenity. And, of course, if ends don’t justify means, nothing can.

One sometimes can also question whether the end itself is justifiable. The public press, for example, wants to get all the news and, in the case of the *New York Times*, to print it. But sometimes that end conflicts with other ends which we—and they—cherish. Dr. Sam Sheppard has been tried again, twelve years after the murder, on this account, and bar associations have lately recommended codes to be followed by the press in its pre-trial dissemination of information concerning persons under indictment. Finally, the intentions of the people who use the mass media are sometimes worth evaluating. *The Reader’s Digest* purports to be a rather random sampling of current articles in various fields. One needn’t scan very many of its tables of contents, however, to note the principles of selection that are employed in determining what articles are fit to be reprinted. Furthermore, about seventy per cent of the articles appearing in the publication nowadays are originals or plants, according to R.M. Christenson in a recent issue of the *Columbia Journalism Review*. That is, the Digest editors specifically commissioned these articles and got other magazines to agree to print them so that the Digest could, in keeping with its professed policies, reprint them—or, inconsistent with its name, give them a first printing. While that fact may seem innocuous enough, the kinds of articles commissioned reveal editorial orien-

tations which should not pass unnoticed.

Second: The media have power. The power of the media comes, at least in part, from their bigness and their fewness. There are three major television networks in the country, and four main radio networks. There is only a handful of magazines having bases broad enough to certify them as mass media, and though newspapers generally have a statistically smaller circulation per publication, their impact is very broadly felt within smaller geographical confines. The power these media have is double-barreled: to speak and to be silent. The Kennedy cult is expanding in large part because the media people have been taken with the charm, vigor, and promise of Jack, Bobby, and Teddy; and since the media people keep a very sharp eye on each other, what appears in one magazine frequently appears in others, with appropriate modifications in keeping with the tone of the various publications, thus creating a snowballing effect. The power to be silent is considerably more difficult to discuss, though it is none the less real, because motives for inaction and the effects of inaction must be ascertained in the absence of one of the crucial factors in the analysis of motives and consequences: overt action. Yet it is not unreasonable to suppose that the media’s failure to drum home to the American public the conceivable implications of our earliest Viet-Nam commitments is in some measure responsible for the scope and intensity of the U.S. involvement there now. If we had realized that there might be 400,000 American soldiers in Viet-Nam by 1966 unless pressure was brought to bear on the President in 1962 or 1964, we might have been more diligent in applying that pressure.

The power of the media to speak and to be silent can be construed in terms of their capacities, as yet un-exercised, in terms of their dominion, as presently executed, and in terms of their influence, as accumulated over the years. All three aspects of the media’s powers suggest areas for analysis and evaluation. We hope to explore these possibilities in the months to come.

Knowledge and valuation are both important with respect to the media. We know the media and their products only too well and, hence, not well enough—just as Aunt Tillie’s foibles are easier to spot than our own. And since the media place great stock in reflecting the values and preferences of their publics—witness the TV magnate’s concern over the Nielsen ratings—we occasionally forget that in some cases the media seem to give us values, and not just mirror them. So I propose to analyze and evaluate the media, all the while appreciating the fact that the analyzer and evaluator is himself subject to error and, for that matter, influence.
Dear Son:

One day, many years from now, you will, I am quite sure, sit down before a blank piece of paper with a pen in your hand wondering when and how the words which must now be written will appear. You will learn that they seldom come at one's casual bidding. At times, it is true, they will flow and tumble like a mountain stream. But more often they will remain locked and silent under the ice of our bewildered hearts and stammering minds. They are strange and wayward things.

I mention this to you now since it always happens to me when I try to write you a letter for Christmas. Last night when we carried in those logs for the first fire of the winter and the wind blew sharp and cold from the north I had no trouble with my words. We talked, you will remember, about your football playing, about Mark's birthday, about the leaves falling like rain from the elms, about the coming of Christmas again. But this morning somehow the words come slowly. Perhaps one reason is that something so great and holy as Christmas should not be put into quick and careless words, easily spoken and soon forgotten. When the angel began to speak in the midnight silence: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior" there was an eternity of divine meditation and compassion behind his simple speech. It had been preparing ever since dusk came over Eden and God, in his evening walk under the trees, came upon a man and woman who were hiding, lonely and ashamed, in a corner of the garden. So many years and such great compassion had gone into the words of the angel, the first description of the meaning of Christmas, that anyone else who says anything about it should say it softly and reverently—as if this were music that comes only if you will take me by the hand and show me how to stand, small and forgiven and happy, before the Manger.

I recall carrying you, years ago, into the living room to hear "Silent Night" for the first time in your life. I thought that I saw a little smile of recognition and understanding on your face, as if this were music that comes with special sweetness to one who is still so close to the new grace of Baptism or even as if the simple melody were the echo of another world from which Christmas is a single rift of light along our darkness, seen most clearly by eyes that have not yet looked out on the world without Christmas. You did not know at that time that the same voices that sing "Silent Night" at Christmas could yell, "Kill the nigger bastards" on hot and stuffy summer nights. You did not know the evil of the earth, the sorrow of life, the hardship of toil, the loneliness of love and the grief of labor. You did not know yet how good is known only in the loss of good, and joy in the deprivation of joy. These you did not yet know and perhaps it was just because you did not know them that "Silent Night" came through to you with singular grace and purity.

And so it must come to all of us, please God, this Christmas Eve—to you and to me standing outside the stable trying hard to look in. As you grow older, you will slowly learn that silence was not only a part of that ancient custom in your recitation in church and the reading of the Christmas Gospel by one of the children. This is the night beyond all others when children should be heard. Christmas, with all its ages and all its depth, with its meeting of history and eternity, is still—and how strange this is—most clearly and warmly understood by those who are closest to the Child in years and understanding. Sometimes we who are much older come close to that beatitude, but more often it eludes us, choked and buried under the rubble of the years. We honor the past more than we live the present. We feel more the homesickness for other Christmases than the presence of this Christmas. If you will read my letters of other years you will see how often I turned back to the Christmases in New York when my parents and brothers and sister and I were all young together and Christmas was now. A little of that you must let me keep each Christmas Eve—the vigil for the past, the remembrance and, by God's pity, the return, of the great simplicity and joy of a Christmas that is really happening now. This is at least part of what the Child become Man meant when He said: "Except ye become as little children...." Christmas is still yours and it can become mine only if you will take me by the hand and show me how to stand, small and forgiven and happy, before the Manger.