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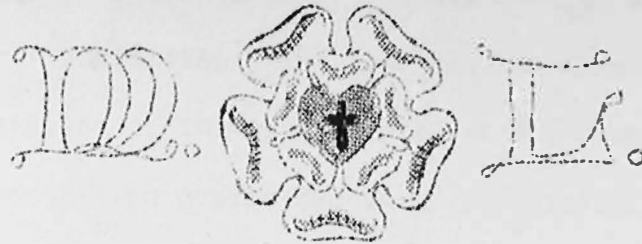
Doctus anserem urbis, sed



~ OCTOBER 1944 ~

REFORMATION

The Seminarian



Festival of the Reformation

October 31, 1944

John Huss, courageous patriot and precursor of the Reformation, when about to be burned at the stake by order of the Council of Constance, in 1414, is said to have uttered this startling prophecy: "To-day you are burning a goose, but there shall rise from my ashes a swan whom you will not be able to burn." The legend alludes to a pun upon the names of Huss and Luther, the one, in the Bohemian tongue meaning "goose," the other by approximation, "swan." Such an interpretation was popular even in Luther's day.

Though legend has colored the accuracy of the last words of Huss, and wrought from them a fanciful interpretation, the swan rising from the ashes has come to symbolize the birth of the Protestant Reformation. The significance, indeed, is clear; for the sixteenth century, under the leadership of Martin Luther, pre-eminently, witnessed a fresh emphasis upon the central message of the Christian faith, the Christian Gospel.

oOo

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THE STAFF

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Wednesday evening, October 25, 1944, faculty, students and friends of the Seminary gathered at a Fellowship Dinner in honor of two retiring members of the Faculty. Those who, as students, participated in these festivities will look back in future years with a deepening appreciation of the significance of this memorable evening. In those brief moments were afforded us a perspective of the growth of this School, over a period of some thirty-five years, in reviewing the faithful and inspiring work of Dr. Offermann and the Rev. Mr. Friday; and in that "brief, bright hour" was given us an intimate glimpse into the strong ties of esteem and affection that bind the members of the Seminary Staff to one another and to the students and school they serve.

That the long years of service of our beloved Registrar and Professor might be recognized by a united expression of the students of the Seminary, appropriate scrolls were drawn up and presented to

FREDERICK WEIPP FRIDAY

"For seventeen years counsellor, friend, and Registrar, whose faithful Christian service has won him the affection and esteem of all whom he has served;" and to

HENRY F. OFFERMANN

"For thirty-four years scholar, teacher, counsellor, friend; whose teaching has held high God's truth and whose life has testified to God's love."

AN APPRAISAL OF THE NEW LUTHER RESEARCH

Robert Geeser

A phenomenon of greatest importance in the realm of theology and history has been the Luther research of the past sixty-five years. As we are about to celebrate another Reformation Day, this paper is written to awaken our consciousness to the importance of these monumental researches.

The Beginnings of the New Research

The movement was not spontaneous but arose from quite definite and external stimuli. First was the rise of a scientific historical research based upon the work of von Ranke and his followers. At the same time (and largely as a result of this movement) archives and collections of source material were made available to scholars as never before. As a result vast amounts of new material were discovered and old sources formerly hidden made accessible. The importance of this can scarcely be overemphasized, particularly with a subject so controversial as Luther. In fact, this controversial aspect afforded an added stimulus for research. There appeared several Roman publications, seemingly scholarly, but with the usual aim wholly to discredit Luther. As a result there arose an extensive interest in Luther research, led by a great number of able young Protestant scholars throughout Germany.

A vast literature has been produced which exhausts many of the biographical problems on Luther and presents to us a completely different picture of the whole life of the reformer. No longer are legends the source of our picture, but rather, sound historical research. No longer is there any excuse for the calumniating Roman nor the idolizing Protestant presentations; instead even the popular biographies must be based upon those monumental studies.

But of far greater importance than this new light upon Luther's life is the elucidation of his theology. For this the more recent work of Karl Holl and C. Stange (leader of the famous Luther-Akademie at Gondershausen) and that of the Swedish scholars Ragnar Bring and Lindroth is of particular importance.

A New Understanding of the Mind of Luther

All this has resulted in a new understanding of Luther's theology and thought. The need for the change was great, for just as seventeenth century orthodoxy misunderstood Luther, so nineteenth century idealism failed to probe the depths of his theology. Neither realized that Luther recovered an entirely fresh approach to Christianity. He had brilliantly interpreted the Apostolic faith for his age. He expounded the tenets of Christian faith with a vividness, richness, and freshness comparable to no Christian mind since St. Paul. This was possible because Luther was a creative religious thinker, a deeply Christian man, not a philosopher.

For Christianity, being what it is, will be creatively reinterpreted only by those who have sounded the depths and breadths of the Christian experience. And who has done this more than Luther?

To clarify our point, we should elaborate upon specific doctrine and that is outside the scope of those paragraphs. Therefore we would but make reference to the discussion of Luther in the brilliant Swedish works in the history of doctrine (o. e. Aulén's Das Christliche Gottesbild and Christus Victor; Nygren's Agape and Eros; and Brilioth's Eucharistic Faith and Practice.) Here let this suffice, that on some of the most fundamental doctrines previous critics had either bound Luther to the Middle Ages, or read into him a modernism and individualism which were not there. As a result of those distortions, basic contradictions seemed to arise in Luther's theology. Aulén has pointed out in Christus Victor, for example, that Luther's doctrine of the Atonement, as it was first understood in the past, appeared to be at variance with the rest of his theology.

This does not mean that Luther was rigidly consistent in his writings and thinking. On the contrary, he was not a systematic theologian but a creative religious man. The problem is to find the basic strains in the mass of writings his fervid and fertile mind produced. To that extent a consistency can be found. Again, the problem is complicated by the vivid imagery he employed. Here the Lundensian approach of Motivforskning (motive-research) has been most successful.

Luther Research and Swedish Theology

The very important Swedish theology of the last two decades, referred to above, is another important result of the Luther research. Its significance must be stressed, especially if the following evaluation by the late Dr. J. O. Ewjon is in any way correct: "Sweden is the country that has been least impressed by the Diabolic Theology. It did not need it. And we do not need it. Otto School, of Germany, wrote that this theology, as a positive quantity, has nothing new that Luther did not have, and that it frequently misinterprets him. This is a correct evaluation."

"Barthianism has been a stirring movement. It has left its traces on every theology and every philosophy of the present. Like an earthquake it has caused the collapse of many illbuilt structures. But it has not been constructive. Just as stirring but wholly constructive is the theology of Sweden sponsored by men like Aulén, Nygren, Bollin, and Lindroth. It makes no noise. But it plays a large role in Stango's "Luther-Akademie in Sondorslansson", Germany, and in the German theological world today as a whole."

Thus of the three significant theological movements today--diabolic, Swedish, and modernist--the Swedish alone has real value for us Lutherans; moreover, it alone has the power to construct a vital interpretation of theology which the church today needs. And that Swedish theology is a direct outgrowth of Luther research.

The New History of Doctrine

A further effect of the Luther research lies in the field of history of doctrine. If Luther's theology had been previously misunderstood, his position in the history of doctrine would not be correctly evaluated. Of great importance is the growing realization that Luther stands in essential relationship to the Apostolic and Ancient Church. His position is unique as a fresh interpreter of Christianity on the basis of the Apostolic faith. We are also enabled to estimate correctly the relation of seventeenth century orthodoxy to Luther. We discover the extent to which orthodoxy strayed from Luther to follow the misleading roads of Biblicism and scholasticism.

Of equal importance is the possibility now afforded us of writing a history of doctrine from the standpoint of what is truly peculiar to Christianity. We may learn from the marvelous insight of Luther into the nature of Christianity. Harnack put forth the organic approach to doctrinal history, but the Luther research has revealed the error of this starting point and shown that his method has many basic misconceptions. His monumental work is rendered almost obsolete. Therefore, (as Aulon has pointed out in his little work, Die Dogmengeschichte in Lichte der Lutherforschung) a new history of doctrine must be written, and that based upon the insights of the Luther research.

Luther Research in America

And what has all this to do with Lutherans in America? Parenthetically the fact that our contributions to the research have been most limited should be noted with regret. Notable efforts, however, are to be found in the work of the late Dr. Reu of Wartburg Seminary and in the Philadelphia edition of Luther's Works. One even wonders if our pastors and theologians are studying Luther for their own personal theology and faith.

Yet this research is essential for us: first, because through it alone American Lutheranism will lose the fetters of seventeenth century orthodoxy. Then only can we make available the great Luthero religious heritage to contemporary America. There is no doubt that to date Lutherans have made little impress upon American thought. There has been little leaven on Pauline, or Lutheran Christianity in the American mass. We may point out historical reasons, of course. But about the time we Lutherans were beginning to express ourselves we felt bound to defend a Biblicism and scholasticism which were not our heritage and which were so foreign to the zeitgeist that we made no impression. There is no point in bewailing the past, but we must be aware of the problems of the present. If Lutheranism is to hold its position in America, and if it is to give to America, what, out of the vast treasure of its heritage it has to give, it must interpret the magnificent insights of Luther's Theology for our age. (And if the spirit of Luther's theology is recovered, the danger of mere blind adoration to the forms of his theology will disappear.)

A Responsibility of Pastors and Seminarians

Nor will this new theology (which no one writes, but of whose need everyone cries) be written if it has not deep roots in the Luther research. Nor will it reach our laymen if the individual pastor has not made it his personal interest. The pastor himself may not be the research scholar, but he should be a thorough student of Swedish theology; he should find support in German theologians—Elert, Althaus, Gasse, Koerberle, Holl. He should be able to present his theology favorably in comparison to dialecticism, Modernism, Protestant Orthodoxy, and Romanism. And is that too much to ask of seminarians who, after all, are not being deferred primarily for vacations or for curtailing their assignments as much as possible? Is it too much to ask of seminarians who are supposedly dedicating their lives to the church? We are called to preach a jpycus triumphant faith of which St. Paul and Martin Luther have given the broadest, richest, and most vivid exposition. Let us know what we believe, what we preach—the really magnificent faith we are privileged to minister!

Finally, we would do well to realize that any attempt at ecumenical Lutheranism must be based upon the Luther research and understanding of its results. There is no hope for such ecumenicity if American Lutherans are left to impress a seventeenth century orthodoxy upon our continental brethren, making what such a theology is as passe as in American thought life in general.

FROM A SEMINARIAN'S NOTEBOOK

WHO WAS MARTIN LUTHER?

"He himself transcribes his name, Luther, into the Greek Eleutherios — liberator; and that is what he is, the Great Liberator, the Abraham Lincoln of the human spirit.

HOW SHALL WE REMEMBER THE DEPARTED?

Luther, in one of his sermons, explained it as follows: "We have no command from God to pray for the dead; therefore, no one sins by not praying for them; for what God does not bid nor forbid to do, in that no one can sin. Yet, on the other hand since God has not permitted us to know how it is with the souls of the departed and we must continue uninformed as to how He deals with them we will not and cannot constrain them nor count it as sin if they do pray for the dead."

WHO WAS MELANCTON?

"He was cast in no such heroic mold as Luther and could never have taken Luther's place, but, humanly speaking, his talents and his labors were just as indispensable to the success of the Reformation as those of the great leader himself. Luther swayed the common people; Melancton commended Luther's doctrines to the learned world. Luther found the deep lying veins of ore and brought the precious metal to light; Melancton coined it and set it in circulation. The gifts and labors of the one supplemented those of the other."

A WORD FROM LUTHER

For to preach Christ means to feed the soul, to make it righteous, to set it free and to save it, if it believe the preaching. For faith alone is the saving and efficacious use of the Word of God.

PROFITABLE FOR READING

No matter how fine the books of a more ephemeral nature are, no pastor or seminarian can afford to be without certain standard works. Among these could be mentioned a variety of translations of the Bible, a good Greek New Testament text and lexicon, an analytical concordance like Young's, the various Hastings Bible Dictionaries, and at least the Philadelphia edition of Luther's works.

But there are also standard works in the various departments of theology that are worth looking into. If a student takes careful notes of the suggested bibliography made by professors in courses he will have a good list of these. Space permits us to mention but a few.

Such a book is William Warren Sweet's standard book, The Story of Religion in America. This is a classic book, and was written by a man who is perhaps the outstanding expert in this field in the world. It is entertainingly written and can be depended upon for scholarship. We Lutherans receive a fairly small treatment, but it does not hurt us to know something of the history of our neighboring communions as well.

In a totally different field is Waldo Selden Pratt's work, The History of Music. Music is part of a pastor's business and all too few of us know much about it. If we are interested in raising the level of musical standards in the Church, we should be able to talk intelligently with musicians. This is a general history of music, the best one volume in the opinion of many experts, but it contains much of church music. Indeed, for centuries

the only important music produced was for the service of religion. As a reference book or for recreational reading this book is well worth its price.

The Lutheran Church has traditionally placed its emphasis, and properly so, not on Old but on New Testament studies. As a result, few Lutheran pastors are sufficiently well versed in the Old Testament. Most of the men now in seminary are familiar with Robert H. Pfeiffer's Introduction to the Old Testament. Your columnist warns you that this is a heavy tome, but that is no excuse for not looking into it! This is the most recent and most thorough-going introduction to the O. T., and all of us should know it and know how to use it. Well worth having on your shelves!

While in the field of O.T. study, I should like to recall to your minds two classic sets of books. They are the late George Adam Smith's two volume studies on The Book of Isaiah and The Book of the Twelve. These are much more than commentaries; they are gems of Christian truth. When books of a duller nature than most commentaries are written, that will be news; but these are so fine and so scholarly that one can read them for a source in Christian doctrine, or for devotional material. If you do not have them, get them by all means while they are still in print.

Our own Paul Zeller Strodach is a man who is outstanding in his chosen field. His two little books on The Church Year and The Collect for the Day are outstanding. All Lutherans, regardless of their degree of churchmanship, can use them with profit for aids in understanding the message of the Sundays and festivals of the Church Year. For homiletical aid or private meditation and devotion they are deserving of a place on your working bookshelf.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LITURGICAL MOVEMENT IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Matthew I. Wiencke

(Continued from last month)

II

In last month's article we set forth the Liturgical Movement as an historical fact, a present reality in the Church, and then attempted to describe the character and spiritual temperaments of its followers. In so doing, the method of investigation was inductive -- in effect, an answer to the question, to whom does the movement appeal? We now turn to the more difficult problem of interpreting the spirit of the movement, purely in the light of its principles: a deductive method of investigation that seeks an answer to the question, what has the movement to offer?

The Historic Concept of the Church

The ancient Preface of the Communion Service affords us an apt illustration. Here is made known the place of the Christian believer--in the vast multitude of worshippers in earth and heaven. With hearts lifted in thanksgiving, the memory of Our Lord's passion, death and glorious resurrection celebrated anew, we enter upon that exalted summary: "Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name; evermore praising Thee, and saying: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. . ." Here is an eminent example of a basic principle of Christian worship, namely, the corporate union of all the faithful before the throne of heaven. It is an historic principle involving the living and those who have gone before. Here is the key to a major emphasis of the liturgical movement in its attempt to enlarge our vision and to align us with the historic Church of all ages: that which, for us, extends from the age of the apostles down to our own day and will continue to the end of time.

To understand such an emphasis we must first appreciate the full import of corporate worship. We may do so without slighting the worth of personal devotion. In defining these two aspects of worship, Heiler speaks of Christian life in terms of the two foci of an ellipse. "One is the quiet chamber of private prayer, the secret communion of the soul with God; the other is the great fellowship of the Church in prayer, the solemn and ceremonial communion with God of the assembled community." And here it is appropriate to recall that Our Lord promised His presence where two or three are "gathered together in My Name." The emphasis, we believe, lies not so much in the number of the believers, be it large or small, but in the promise of the divine presence vouchsafed to the faithful gathered together in corporate worship.

We must remember, too, that the Christian faith resides in a message rather than in a book. This message, the Gospel, "once delivered unto the saints," and coming down to us through twenty centuries, is our present

heritage. We are not at the same point, historically, with the apostles. The Gospel has seen a continuous application through varying ages and the results of this long process and development of evangelical teaching are all part of our present possession. Thus do we stand in the line of an historic Church.

Similarly, Christian worship has undergone development. Every historic liturgy, every anthology of prayers from earliest times to our own day records this development and growth. This embodies a true, living tradition in the best sense. In a splendid passage, that, even in prose catches the rhythm of the theme expressed, Dr. Strodach alludes to such a continuity as "a mighty chorus welling through the ages--echoing, reechoing, like a glorious antiphonal song of century singing, praying to century down the stretch of time"... and speaks of our devotional treasure as coming from "many times and many places, from many hearts, the breathings of the comings to God."

The liturgical movement cherishes such appreciation of the historic Church not because the mere historic is commendable to our times, but for the inescapable fact that we to-day stand in this historic line of Christianity. It discovers that all we treasure has come down to us through the Church, indeed, the pearl of greatest price--the very Gospel. Moreover, these treasures of our faith have been enriched by the witness of Christian lives, blessed with the special gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Liturgy, as an expression of the Gospel, is one such development in the life of the Church. Here is a united voice of One Holy Church. Here is a tangible expression of true ecumenical Christianity.

In our discussion of the liturgical movement and its regard for the historical character of the Church, two further matters should be mentioned. One is that in accordance with Lutheran principles, tradition must always stand the test of the Gospel. Such a refining process assures us of purity of doctrine and practice. Another point is that the Church, in like manner as the householder of the Gospel narrative, brings forth out of her treasure things new and old. We cherish a worthy and venerable tradition, but to our heritage is added the contributions of our own age. We seek to clothe the worship of the Church in pure forms that are appropriate to our own day as well, and these, if worthy, will become the heritage of a future age.

A Central Doctrine

Having viewed the Movement in the Lutheran Church in the light of an emphasis upon historic Christianity, we may go further in our description of its true spirit. Here we would single out two areas: the source of the movement and the life that flows from this source. The one concerns a guiding and controlling doctrine, the other the expression of this doctrine in life.

It is for the theologian to treat adequately of the doctrinal foundation that undergirds Lutheran worship. However, a very practical illustration of the doctrinal basis of the liturgical movement may be had in a comparison of the Lutheran with similar movements in other churches.

At the risk of drawing quite general conclusions, we may suggest the trend of the movement elsewhere and then turn to our own church. In the Roman communion the leaders of liturgical reform, principally the Benedictines, are attempting to restore simplicity and purity and to encourage the active participation of the laity in the services of their church. Referring repeatedly to the doctrine of the Body of Christ, they seek, by the wholehearted participation of the laity in the corporate worship of the church, to translate liturgy into life. Roman theology prevails, yet in these earnest efforts one may detect an approach to evangelical ideals of worship. In the Anglican Church, the liturgical revival begun by the Oxford Movement over a century ago, represented in its earlier stages a reaction to a rigid Calvinism, a re-discovery of the historic doctrines of the church, and, most characteristic of all, the flowering of a devotional life that to this day continues to express one of the finest qualities of English church life. It must be admitted, however, that many Anglo-Catholics have shifted the original emphasis of the Oxford Movement. In many quarters the early vigorous life is spent, supplanted by a cold formalism. This state of affairs is nowhere more regretted than by certain sincere Anglicans, among them Evelyn Underhill, who, in describing this trend, confesses that now "Martha takes the place of Mary as the pattern of the worshipping soul." In the free churches the liturgical movement presents something of an anomaly. Possessing no historic liturgy, their leaders either abandon the theology of their fathers or rest their claims upon the basis of aesthetic appreciation and emotional appeal.

Against such a varying background the true doctrinal basis of the liturgical movement in the Lutheran Church stands forth with strength and clarity. For Lutherans the characteristic principle in worship is expressed in the doctrine of grace. Luther's words from the Small Catechism indicate the spirit of Lutheran worship: "Where there is forgiveness of sin there is also life and blessedness." Here is an evangelical principle that alone will give strength to the liturgical movement in our church. The "one thing needful" is the Gospel, the glad tidings of the sola gratia. Such a doctrine, central to Lutheranism, is reflected throughout her worship. When true to its principles, the liturgical movement builds upon this foundation and infuses its manifold expressions of worship with this spirit. From this source the movement in our church can make its finest contribution, for when one seeks to interpret the worship of the Church as an expression of the Gospel, he is going at once to the very heart of our faith. This rich source gives life and impetus to the liturgical movement even as it assuredly motivates any outward manifestation of an evangelical faith.

The Question of Adiaphora

In speaking of the liturgy as an expression of the Gospel, Lutherans invariably encounter the question of adiaphora. The term has attained to classic prominence in Lutheran thought; indeed, since its incorporation into the Lutheran Confessions, the doctrine has enjoyed a singular career. Perhaps most unfortunate of all the definitions of adiaphora is "indifference." To cite an example, ceremonies are rightly classified as matters of adiaphora, yet not wholly as matters of indif-

ference. W. H. Frere goes so far as to state that "it is a form of blindness, not common sense, that prevents a man from recognizing that behind ceremonies there lie realities--principles, doctrines, and states or habits of mind. No one can hope to judge fairly of matters of ceremonial who does not see that the reason why they cause such heat of controversy is that they signify so much." From indifference the term comes to mean unimportance and by further stages calls for disuse or outright rejection. Such has been the fate of such that is fine, indeed most expressive of the life of our Church. Our liturgical heritage requires cultivation and practice; when this is lacking the flower withers and dies. Here the law of survival of the fittest or the rule of the majority do not always apply in deciding what is worthy. Apathy and indolence together with concessions to the rival claims of pietism and rationalism all had their share in bringing upon the Church a neglect of her worship life.

A good part of the loss stemmed from a one-sided interpretation of the doctrine of adiaphora. In this regard the advocates of the liturgical movement point out that many of the adjuncts of worship can and do express the true Gospel. As each detail makes its proper contribution to a classic poem, a painting, or a symphony, so in worship, the service of art or music, a detail of ceremonial, a beautiful vestment--each in its way expressive of the Gospel message--deserves its place. To continue the figure, even as one would not presume to remove a verse of poetry here, a bar of music there, or delete a portion of a canvass, in the instance of a classic expression of art, so in the liturgy a similar mutilation is equally inappropriate. The question is not how much we can remove short of the collapse of the whole structure, but the building of a perfect whole, and in the case of Christian worship, all "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth ... Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner Stone."

"There are adiaphora;" writes a scholar of our church, "but there is a time when such developments as the liturgy, rites, and ceremonies, and their symbolical adjuncts, may no longer be regarded as such. Rather, on the other hand, must they be regarded as an exemplification and a truly Confessional vitalization of the faith. They are the contribution of faith working in life: they are the dress in which devout devotion presents its worship. For this--such things--certainly cannot be adiaphora!"

The Life the Movement seeks to cultivate

The kind of life the liturgical movement seeks to express is suggested in the simple precept, ora et labora--prayer and work, the sacramental giving yielding fruit in sacrificial spending. Such a balance lies at the center of Christian morality, of man's relation to God and to his fellowmen. For all "the ascending life of worship to which men are invited is destined to become at last the life of charity." The one embodies the spiritual and the other its practical expression.

This principle, and the rich life it represents, is borne out in the eloquent witness of the great leaders of the church from St. Paul to our present day. In these personalities we discover a deep spiritual source given expression in unselfish lives of service. It is a fascinating, indeed, inspiring study, to examine the biographies of Christian men and women with this thought in mind. The two facets appear so far apart, even at variance with one another, yet, in reality, they are supplementary and unite to form an integrated Christian personality. The infinite capacity for receiving divine grace is matched with the glowing zeal for ser-

vice in the Kingdom of God. For such a Christian "each choice which he makes, each exercise of his limited freedom will either glorify or not glorify God; therefore he cannot divorce faith from works, or adoration from ethics." To worship well is to live well.

A practical illustration of this balance in the realm of worship and life may be observed in the place the study of liturgics holds in a Seminary curriculum. Though classed under the department of practical theology, an area in closest contact with the practical needs of the everyday world, liturgics, for all its externality, ultimately concerns the loftiest spiritual heights of the Christian faith. It treats essentially of worship as a fundamental activity of redeemed mankind.

True Expressions of Worship

A concluding thought in our discussion of the life of the liturgical movement concerns all that is employed as expressions of worship. We must look beyond a superficial understanding of "aids to worship." For can we hope to appreciate the fullness of our liturgy unless we see in all the forms it uses, expressions of the central message of salvation, God's redeeming grace. All that contributes to the structure of the liturgy, the ordered arrangement of scripture, the hymns and canticles, all the arts which are invested with a sacred significance--these things are not mere "aids to worship," in the popular sense, but rather expressions of thanksgiving that grow out of the heart filled with the knowledge of God's love. They are spontaneous expressions arising from the unspeakable gratitude of the worshipper, "ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven."

To speak of the elements of worship as "aids" is to make of worship a method, an external technique imposed from without. The glorious liturgy of the Church is no such external matter; it is the action which clothes the sacramental gift of God's grace and the sacrificial response of His creatures. Evelyn Underhill, to whose insight into the principles of worship we are indebted in the preparation of this article, points out that in vital connection with the Service of the Church, "all that is finest in music, color and light, are true expressions of worship. They do not exist for the sake of the congregation, or because of their devotional appeal." And it is a Lutheran scholar who declares that true expressions of worship operate upon the basic principle of incarnation: "the use of art in worship is not a mere imitation of the creative work of God, not is it only a homage rendered to Christ; by giving embodiment to invisible realities, it continues the Incarnation of the Word." A bold assertion, indeed--one we must take greatest care rightly to understand--and all the while tempered by the thought of the utter humility of Christ's Incarnation. There is even an "hopeless inadequacy of created beauty, as a medium for the disclosure of the secret of the Uncreate." And insofar as the liturgical movement seeks to clothe the message of salvation in forms that are the expression of grateful hearts, it is, in the fullest possible sense, giving reality to worship, ministering to the spiritual lives of men and women of God.

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COMMON SENSE IN WORSHIP

Robert E. Mohr

A Basic Principle

Some impulses and experiences of life are so elemental as to baffle definition and analysis. One such impulse or experience is worship. It is a universal phenomenon; yet it is a mystery. Theologians and seminarians have taken the matter in hand, but have found it elusive, and their definitions have satisfied few besides themselves. All we can do in discussing this subject is posit a few basic principles. One such principle is this: worship is an intensely personal experience. Thus it is the concern of individuals. This principle I deem most important, and shall use it as the guide for this discourse. When the individual no longer has an edifying personal experience when he worships, the act becomes a mockery.

What Is "Lutheran" in Worship?

What man is there who has such keen insight concerning spiritual things that he can say his is the only right way to worship? Such an egotistic assumption would deny the facts of history and the valid leading of the Holy Spirit. Jesus no more gave explicit directions for worship than He did for ecclesiastical polity. He left both for His followers to work out for themselves in accordance with the needs of their times and the spirit of the Gospel.

Martin Luther, the man who restored to the Christian Church the emphasis on the individual Christian, never insisted that his followers use one form of worship. He was the author of "Lutheran freedom." He believed in it; he practiced it. His principle was incorporated into the Augsburg Confession which says, "It is not necessary that human traditions, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike," since "to the true unity of the Church, it is enough to agree concerning the doctrines of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments" (Art. VII). What right then, as any group or individual to claim his method is "true Lutheran worship"? Yet how often we hear that claim.

May I remind such persons, therefore, of the following facts, upon the authority of the Holy Scripture, the spirit of Martin Luther, and the Augsburg Confession: 1) There never has been or never will be one true Christian or Lutheran form of worship. 2) Any group that claims to follow "traditional Lutheranism" must of necessity advocate freedom in worship. Insisting upon one form and one way of doing things is not Lutheran. It is Roman. 3) Lutheran unity is found in the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments, not in a liturgy, as some like to insist. 4) The Lutheran service is emphatically a people's service, in which the spiritual welfare of individuals is the primary concern. The more or less of ritual is of secondary importance. Any form should be judged accordingly.

These facts, I believe, are incontrovertible. In them we find the answer to what is "Lutheran" in worship. Any form of worship, whether liturgical or free, is Lutheran if it arouses within the individual the feeling of communion with his God. That is the essential criterion.

The Liturgical Movement and Tradition

There can be no doubt that there is a liturgical movement in progress in the Lutheran Church to-day. But, as a recent article in *The Seminarian* put it, "some hail the rise of the liturgical movement with joy and gratitude and others with an equal measure of concern and apprehension." I am one of the latter group, I hope not because of prejudice or personal feeling, but because of its effect upon the individuals in our congregations. I believe that the liturgical movement, as I have come to know it, has done, is doing, and will do considerable harm to the reality of the worship experience of our members. It seems, according to last month's article in this paper, that Christian faith is about to come into full expression, and a confused and bewildered world is about to find fresh contact with the objective message of salvation. All this, mind you, "through the medium of the Divine Liturgy." Such a statement is absurd. Christian faith does not come into full expression in forms or liturgies. It can only do so in the personal life of the individual. I realize that the term "Divine Liturgy" can be used in a very broad sense meaning the sum total of man's relations with God, but such is not the general use of the phrase. It is evident from contact with the enthusiasts of the liturgical movement that they really mean specific forms of worship. Rituals, forms, liturgies — these are the means of expressing Christianity according to the devotees of ritualism. In academic discussion and in theory they may deny it, but a casual observation is all that is necessary to establish its truthfulness. I submit that such a view of Christian expression is wholly inadequate. It places the emphasis upon the outward act and promotes a very mechanical idea of worship.

One of my reasons for viewing the liturgical movement with concern is the slavish adherence to tradition that its advocates display. Now tradition in itself can hardly be condemned. No one can be free from tradition. When followed with discretion, it is harmless and often quite beneficial. But traditionalism can become a cancer that not only prevents good healthy growth, but destroys life itself. That is what I feel is happening in congregations that are being forced into the acceptance of many so-called traditional practices of worship without their full and wholehearted approval. What was practiced in the sixteenth century should be retained in the twentieth century only if it is adaptable to twentieth century conditions.

Let me cite an example. The use of the vestment known as the chasuble was commonplace at the time of the Lutheran Reformation. It was one of the many vestments that had developed in the Roman Church to help express the sacrificial spirit of the Mass. Under such conditions, its use meant something, for it expressed in symbolic form the special sacrifice that the priest performed on the altar. But in the twentieth century, in the Lutheran Church, where there is no idea of a sacrifice in the worship service at all, the chasuble is definitely out of place. Its sacrificial meaning becomes absurd in a non-sacrificial service. What other reasons could there be for its use to-day? Does its use make the Sacrament more efficacious than other-

wise? Does it help to explain what the Sacrament is? Do Lutheran laymen or pastors have any idea what it symbolizes? Does its use make the minister more worthy or his function as administrator? The answer to all these questions undoubtedly is in the negative. The only reason this vestment is now used in some circles of the Lutheran Church is that generation after generation some traditionalists have perpetuated it. To 99% of our people the chasuble is nothing more than a pretty garment. The other 1% know that its origin was in the Roman Church and that it was used to symbolize sacrifice.

What right then, has such a tradition to be perpetuated? None at all, for under twentieth century conditions, it has no reasonable meaning. This instinctive clinging to the traditional in matters pertaining to worship eventually leads the worshipper into all kinds of absurdities. The reading of the Lessons from the horns of the altar, orientation, genuflections, signs of the cross, and other practices have symbolism foreign to the spirit of the Lutheran Church. Yet these are some of the practices that the followers of the liturgical movement would add to our present forms. It is this fanatical clinging to tradition, I believe, that contributes much to the spiritual decay and apathy that is so prevalent to-day. It is doing the Church immeasurable harm. Therefore it should be abandoned.

Ritualistic Underbrush

The moments spent in true Christian worship are moments spent in contact with the great Reality of the universe and of life. If I believed such an experience could best be realized by means of a highly ritualistic service, I should embrace the principles of the liturgical movement without hesitation. But such is not my conviction. From my own experience and from the experiences of others, I have found that a highly liturgical service does much to prevent this contact with God. Rather is there produced a false feeling of security by the outward movements and elaborate vestments. These things focus my attention upon the human element.

Some seminarians, organists, artists, architects, aesthetes and the like will disagree with me, I am sure. But let these dissenters remember that in the whole American Church, their number is pitifully small. The great majority of farmers, miners, factory workers, office workers, and housewives, who comprise the average congregation, will agree, for they cannot fathom the maze of form and ritual that is advocated by the liturgical revivalists. Theirs is a practical world. They understand and appreciate simplicity.

It does not follow that a liturgical service should be wholly abandoned and complete anarchy introduced. It means that everything in our services of worship that is not easily understood by our constituency should be abandoned. Meaningless gestures, impossible symbolism, absurd vestments, unedifying music, and all the ritualistic underbrush must be ruthlessly sloughed off. The spiritual welfare of our members demands it. I therefore call upon the devotees of liturgical revival, in all seriousness to consider the needs of our laymen in this matter of worship. Let the personal idiosyncrasies of this small group be confined to sacristies or the privacy of their own chapels, but may our people be delivered from this cancerous ritualism in public worship.

Concluding Remarks

According to a few liturgical prophets, we are at the dawn of a new age, for vestments are growing in abundance, black suits are on the increase, plain song will soon be popular, and the black robe will be banished forever. The future, indeed, is a bright one. But I liken this prophecy to the advent of the Christmas season. Soon we shall be seeing great displays of tinsel and ornaments. The outward show will be extensive. But after a few weeks, all the paraphernalia that accompanies a secular celebration of Christmas will be put away, and the world will again settle down to the realities of life. American Lutheran worship is approaching its Christmas also. The tinsel and the ornaments are being unwrapped and displayed publicly in ritualism and ceremonies. But when the novelty of seeing the frills wears off, Lutheran worship will again settle down to its daily tasks, in the dress of every-day life.

Meanwhile, let the majority of keep our heads in this matter of worship, and continue to glorify God in an understandable and effective way. Let us never place tradition before the spiritual needs of men. Let us remember that the pastor, the organist, the architect, and the artist are only three among three hundred in our Sunday services. Let the other three hundred decide for themselves what brings them closer to their God. They know best how they feel on the subject. They should be the ones to determine the form of worship to be followed and the type of hymns to be sung. Let us not turn our congregations into small groups of professionals who have had special training in the arts. Rather let us sense the simple but passionate desire of the common man to worship his God in a simple way and provide the means by which this can be done. Then there will be joyous and reverent acceptance of the Word of God by our people, and worship will be an experience for our members that is real source of power and inspiration.

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(Note: The author of the article quoted above, in the section, "The Liturgical Movement and Tradition," would here correct an evident misunderstanding. The specific term, "Divine Liturgy," does not refer to forms and ceremonies in the popular sense, but to that corporate action which, in historic Christendom, is central to worship, namely, the Celebration of the Lord's Supper. Here the faith and thanksgiving of repentant believers is met with God's forgiving grace, announced in His Word and given in the Body and Blood of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Such a medium is the "Divine Liturgy.")

NEW LUTHERAN ALUMNI FELLOWSHIP
IN THE PHILADELPHIA AREA

Students who were active in the Lutheran Students Association in college days are now hearing of the organization of a Philadelphia Chapter of the LUTHERAN ALUMNI FELLOWSHIP. Current interest in such a project has resulted in the formation of a Temporary Planning Committee, including in its number three students of the Seminary, William Ward, Robert Mohr, and Arthur Seyda. The committee submits plans for three supper meetings to be held in different parts of the city to which Lutheran students who are college graduates are invited.

The following program, arranged for the current year, includes as speakers two professors of the Philadelphia Seminary.

Tuesday, November 14:

Supper meeting in the center of the city. Brief business session and election of permanent chairman.

Subject for discussion:

Christian Education in the Sunday Church School (Mr. George Myers of the Philadelphia Public School System, speaker, and in the Large University (Professor E. T. Horn of the Philadelphia Seminary and formerly Lutheran Student Pastor at Cornell University, speaker).

Tuesday, February 5: (tentative date):

Supper meeting near center of the city. Brief business session.

Subject for discussion:

Christian Education in the Week-day Church School (The Rev. Frank Glutz, Trinity Lutheran Church, speaker), and in the Church-related College (Dr. J.C. Seegers, Temple University, speaker).

Tuesday, May 1 (tentative date):

Supper meeting in the Mt. Airy-Chosenut Hill section.

Subject for discussion:

Christian Education in the Community (Dr. H. S. Oberly, University of Pennsylvania, and Dr. O. F. Nolte, of the Philadelphia Seminary, speakers).

Further information regarding the time and place of these meetings will be posted. The dates and subjects for discussion of the last two meetings may be slightly altered. The speakers will present their subjects in fifteen minute talks to be followed by round-table discussions.

It has been thought by some that only alumni who were members of a Lutheran Students Association in college are invited to membership in the LUTHERAN ALUMNI FELLOWSHIP. On the contrary, this organization, though continuing many of the principles of the LSAA is open to any Lutheran who is a college graduate.

Some Observations On Social Work and Religion

William Ward

(Editor's Note: The following article reflects the author's growing interest and experience in sociology and its relation to the work of the pastor. In the course of his study in this field, Mr. Ward has served as adviser to the social service committee at Hendricks Chapel, Syracuse University, and at present is associated with the department of statistics and research of an organization which coordinates private social welfare and health activities in the Philadelphia Metropolitan area.)

Modern social work, refined and specialized as it is, had its roots in the Christian Church of Apostolic and post-Apostolic days. It is obvious, however, that organized charity and related activities have largely passed out of the control of the church and into "secular" hands. There are, of course, notable exceptions. The Roman Catholic, Episcopal, and Lutheran churches have continued to maintain separate agencies and institutions, and, with the possible exception of that of the Episcopal Church, in only a few communities is the social welfare work of those church bodies intimately related to such broad non-sectarian organizations as the local council of social agencies, the local Community Chest, or the national fund-raising or standard-setting agencies. Whether or not the church-related agencies should participate in the common fund-raising campaigns or avail themselves more fully of the advice and counsel of the broader agencies, which are in the best position to be clearing-houses of information and teachers of new techniques, is being warmly debated.

The withdrawal of the church (at least in proportion to the total volume) from social welfare work, has had its tolling effects upon the selection and training of social workers, and it would hardly be fair for the church to indulge in much adverse criticism. These effects are evident in the philosophy behind the training in schools of social work, and in the character of the pupils and their instructors. In no sense does the modern professional worker interpret his desire to enter his field as the clergyman interprets his call to the ministry. Social work is a profession, like law or medicine or teaching, and, although there may be an element of humanitarianism in it, the philosophy behind it is mainly secular.

With the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, religious bodies most frequently employ graduates of secular schools of social work. Their other employees (lay people who learn by actual experience, or ordained ministers who show interest in or aptitude toward that special phase of the "Ministry of Mercy") are seldom classed technically as professional social workers. So far as I know, neither the Lutheran Church nor any other Protestant body has a graduate for the training of social workers.

The results of the present situation may be summed up as follows: Religion as a resource in the solution of life-problems in our complicated urbanized civilization is not generally or adequately recognized by professional social workers. From our Lutheran point of view, we could scarcely say that the religion that is brought into the picture is evangelical. It is often confused or distorted--confused with humanitarianism or distorted by sentiment. In other cases religion is either given mere lip-service, or it is completely ignored. Let me give some examples:

Several months ago the editor of one of the most influential social work journals in this country made a speech at a regional conference of social welfare and labor leaders. In the course of his remarks he said something like this: "What the average man and woman want today out of life are food, health, sex, and fun--the life of Reilly." I don't think he was just kidding. That's what he believed. In his speech he mentioned ways and means of meeting the wants of the average man and woman, giving me the impression that social welfare work might be considered like something on the market which is designed to capture the imagination of the buyer. I had always thought that "Reilly" was essentially a religious person, but this speaker said nothing at all about the part that religion can play in "Reilly's" life. And I had an idea that needs were more important to meet than "wants".

Shortly after this, a speaker at a convention of social workers here in Philadelphia made the "startling" announcement that the theory of original sin is now considered dangerous nonsense by the better informed classes of people. Indeed, he continued, the ills of man are man-made, and man will eventually solve every one of them.

The kinds of materialism and doubtful optimism illustrated above show us the direction which the philosophy of some of those who control our social welfare work can take when religion is relegated to the least noticeable place, or when it is debunked by persons who make pronouncements without too much thought of the implications. I have noticed, however, that religion is not forgotten so completely that it cannot be appealed to as a motive for contributing to community chest campaigns. Sydney H. Falkner, who recognizes four motives for the support of social work--the religious, the abstract ethical, the common sense, and the scientific progressive motives--writes that while the first two motives are less accentuated today than the other two, it is safe to say that the main support for social work still comes from those who are motivated by religious and state interests.

I think that the following are fair observations of recent trends in social work: the profession is becoming ultra-professionalized; labor interests are exerting more and more pressure in social work circles; and it is becoming increasingly difficult to tell where the line is to be drawn between public and private responsibilities in the administration of social welfare. Reinhold Niebuhr feels that the general tendency of secular organizations to take over the social services which were once within the province of the church is quite logical. He states that it is the business of the church to pioneer in the discovering of the obligations of

society, and to step out of the way when there is a general recognition by society of her responsibilities. More recently, others have assigned the same function to private social agencies--picnoring, then withdrawal.

Niebuhr does not, however, feel that the religious motive and the religious insight can be dropped from the personal qualifications of the social worker without dire consequences. This is, I believe, where the Christian Church of today fits into the picture. If Christians are convinced that religion is not sufficiently employed as a resource by these practitioners, they should begin to take steps to see to it that this evil is corrected. ⁴ There are many persons within the social work profession who would applaud any intelligent move on the part of the church in this direction.

The bright side of the picture lies in the recognition by some social work practitioners of the need on their part for a better understanding of religion as a force in the lives of the people with whom they deal. I have even suspected that the representatives of religion are being "kicked" back toward a more vital interest in social work. Experts in the field of community organization are enlisting the local congregations in their fight against juvenile delinquency, venereal disease, etc. Ministers are being invited, for example to institutes on the care of the returned veteran. Many other examples could be cited.

On the other hand, many a minister has come to realize that he is not a "jack-of-all-trades". If he has an urban parish hardly a week goes by in which he does not have a genuine opportunity to cooperate with social workers in meeting the needs of the people of his community. He must determine which of these needs fall within his responsibility as a Minister of the Gospel. of course, but he can hardly rule out the role of the cooperative social worker upon whose skill and time he may draw. Indeed, I hardly see how a conscientious minister can do otherwise than call upon the social worker from time to time, unless he simply has no conception of the limits within which he, on the basis of his calling and training, can work.

Finally, insituations in which the aid of the minister is requested by the social worker, and in those in which the minister draws upon the skill of the social worker, the minister has a priceless opportunity to interpret to the social worker the meaning that the Gospel of Jesus Christ had for all the broken and hopeless lives which come under his care. In this manner, the minister can be a powerful leavening influence upon those who administer and plan social welfare work even while remaining within his own province. This, it seems to me, is a sensible solution for the minister who is trying to think through his relationships with socially constructive organizations, outside of the church, in his community. But if, in performing this cooperative function, he becomes anything less than a true minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he is betraying himself and his people, and is making no permanent contribution to the outlook of the social worker.

- 1 see Ullhorn, Gerhard, Christian Charity in the Ancient Church, 1883 and Niebuhr, Reinhold, The Contribution of Religion to Social Work, 1932.
- 2 For a detailed list of graduate schools of social work see Brown, Esther, Social Work as a Profession, 3rd Ed., 1938, pp. 27ff.
- 3 Miller, Sydney, Social Work and the Training of Social Workers, 1928, pp. 27.
- 4 Christian educators within the United Lutheran Church are beginning to take these steps.

MY HOMILETICAL CREED

The world is all too full of those who wish to prove what God, in faith, has given us. No need, our people need, no proofs, if they come to see him as a friend.

If we see him there on a little grassy hill, teaching his friends his truths; if we walk through the crowd around him, and take our places near him, and look into his eyes, and hear his voice, and think about his words; if this, then proofs and arguments are empty and worthless and dead.

What matter the proofs of God if we, looking into his eyes, see there the living God, that matters denominationalism when we listen, there at his feet, to the words that bring eternal calm. All the arguments about the virgin birth are worthless when we go and stand with the shepherds before the manger at Bethlehem. All the discussions of the miracles are empty when we hear him say, "thy faith hath made thee whole." There is nothing more useless than a doctrine when we stand under the shadow of the cross and see for ourselves the agony and hear the dying prayer, "Father, forgive...."

Someone, I suppose, has to take care of the details, but I would rather take my people to the open tomb and have them weep with Mary in the garden, than hear the most learned dissertation on the better and earlier proof in the Epistles. I would rather have my people see Elijah and Moses talking with him, or see him on the parascus road, than understand how he fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies.

And if the day should come when texts and versions and doctrines are proven false, then my people and I shall still rejoice, for we shall have seen him and heard him saying unto us, his friends, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Philip Hoh