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# The + Seminarian

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The Annunciation  
1947

THE LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT PHILADELPHIA

# The <sup>+</sup> Seminarian

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THE LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
at Philadelphia

January 7, 1947

Mr. Robert M. Ireland  
7301 Germantown Avenue  
Philadelphia 19, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Ireland

Now that I have had an opportunity to read through the Advent number of THE SEMINARIAN, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you, the members of your staff, and the entire student body on this issue. The new format is most attractive and the content is worthy throughout. I am happy to have our student body sponsoring a magazine of this quality.

For years I have had the feeling that our students would do well to reduce the number of issues per year and to make those that are published as excellent as possible. I do not know whether a reduction in the number of issues is contemplated, but I certainly would suggest that it be kept to a number, the content of which can be of the excellent quality you have in this issue.

With every good wish to you and the staff for a fine year, I am

Sincerely yours,

PAUL J. HOH  
President

# Unity

From the articles that have been received for this issue it would seem that the theme of this number of THE SEMINARIAN might be called "unity."

With our thoughts centered on the Lenten period and looking forward to the climactic events of Holy Week, it seems quite in keeping that our attention should be turned to the position and the effectiveness of the church in the world today in carrying the gospel of salvation, the gospel of good news, to all men.

During the past month the central theme of our campus extra-curricular activities has been unity. The Interseminary movement has had a Philadelphia area meeting here. The Lutheran Student Association has met in conference at Stroudsburg. Students of the Seminary at Gettysburg have met here in a two day period of Interseminary Fellowship. These events have produced numerous reactions throughout the student body. The pros and cons of these have been debated almost daily in small groups here on the campus. As an observer one is led to say that there are two definite views prevalent today. On the one hand, there is the group which favors all of these activities and sees in the Interseminary Movement and the "Ecumenical Reformation" the future hope of the church. On the other hand, there is the group which vigorously protests any activities of this nature. Their view might be characterized by the phrase, "Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran men only."

The views of the writers of this issue have been in favor of a unity of some sort, either inter-communion or inter-lutheran. It is the hope of the staff that these views will lead others to submit articles for a future number of THE SEMINARIAN, either supporting or denouncing, with their reasons, the stand taken on the issues set forth herein.

# Your Cousin, Finland

Helsinki is a long way from Mount Airy!

When I was first informed that the Archbishop had chosen me to go to America to study the methods of the Lutheran Church in America, I naturally tried to envision the Seminary at Philadelphia, its buildings and its life. But one is so conditioned by experience, and my experience had been so different from yours, that my visions proved, in actuality, to be mere visions and nothing more.

At the University of Helsinki, the students are not fortunate enough to have dormitories or anything like your Refectory. While a University Commons is now being built, it will not be finished for many years, and so the students will continue in their age-long custom of boarding in private homes, or, if they are lucky, with friends who live in or near the university town. Our classes, like yours, start at eight or nine in the morning, and continue until noon. We then have one or two hours for the noon meal, and perhaps one or two classes after lunch. There is one two-hour seminar once every other week. The dress of the students at both seminaries is similar except that we cannot get the good clothes which you are able to buy here—nor your bright ties! Our students wear more sober colors—not only seminarians, but

all students would shun the bright colors for which you have such a liking!

Our sports are organized on a voluntary basis, much the same as yours in Mount Airy. We have rowing in the harbor in the summer and spring, and in the winter practice indoors. Basketball, indoor and outdoor tennis, riding, skiing, skating, hockey, football, and baseball are some of the other sports which we enjoy.

The addition of municipal recreational accommodations to those provided by the university is one of the benefits of being located in the center of the city of Helsinki. The university is in the old part of town, and, in its urban setting, could be compared to your Yale University in the center of New Haven. The seminarians, who number from three hundred to five hundred students, have the use of three large libraries: The Theological Seminary Library, which, as the name indicates, consists exclusively of theological works, which must be used in the building; the theological department in the main University Library; and the Theological section of the Library of the Student Body. The Seminarians at Helsinki have no separate publications devoted to the Seminary, such as this for which I write; the regular university publications are used for this purpose.

The academic year is practically identical with that prevailing in the United States, and begins about the middle of September. The Christmas vacation, which starts about the middle of December, lasts one month, after which the Spring semester starts about the tenth of January. Easter vacation lasts one week, and the year ends usually about the tenth of May, which I understand is a little earlier than is customary in the United States.

As is the case at Mount Airy, we have no classes on Saturdays or Sundays. We are sometimes assigned to various parishes in the city on Sundays, to teach Bible School or as youth leaders, but never as liturgists until we are ordained. The Seminary grants two degrees: the *Sacri Ministerii Candidatus*, which is equivalent to your Bachelor of Divinity, and *Theologiae Candidatus*, which is equivalent to your Doctor of Divinity, except that it is not an honorary degree. We have nothing that compares to your Master of Sacred Theology. The degrees are granted *Approbatum Cum Laude*, *Magna Cum Laude* and *Laudatur*. The minimum requirement for graduation is one dissertation. But if a degree *Laudatur* is to be granted, a dissertation must be written in each of the following fields: Old Testament Exegetics, New Testament Exegetics, Dogmatics and Ethics, Practical Theology, and Church History.

The conduct of the classes

themselves is a little more formal in Finland than it is here. We are required to rise when the professor enters the lecture hall, and once the lecture has commenced, there are no interruptions for discussion except at the expressed invitation of the professor. I was amazed the first time I saw students here in America with their feet up on the chair or desk in front of them, for that would never be permitted in Finland. However, I came, I saw, I experimented, and find it is very comfortable whether for listening or for dozing.

Now before you get the idea that the student-professor relationship in Finland is entirely formal, let me tell you that every professor usually has a small group come to his home, just as your professors do, where there is theological talk, customarily accompanied by coffee and cake.

Among other informal gatherings I would like especially to mention the participation of the seminarians in the activity of the Student Christian Movement. To this organization belong members from all the colleges of the University of Helsinki, and also from the other universities. Common meetings are held at least once a week for the purpose of studying in the Bible and discussing its application to the life of the modern student. Thus, seminarians come into contact with other university students studying for careers in different fields. Contacts between students and the laboring class

have also been more frequent since the war, and many meetings are held to discuss questions which concern them both. During the war, the Finnish student came into close contact with men from other classes of society, and this has been a valuable factor in building up a closer understanding of diversified lives and outlooks. This is one of the advantages in having the seminary a part of the university, for the seminarian generally mixes with men of widely diverse backgrounds and ambitions.

I think that generally we Finns are more inclined to be given to the silence which usually is a characteristic of the introvert. This is true also of the seminarian, and would constitute one of the chief differences that I have noticed in the theological students in the two countries. Just as you do, we have the individual freedom which results from Christian Liberty. There are some students

who smoke and some who do not. Although there is no rule about dancing or drinking, no seminarians ever indulge in either. Your whole attitude is freer, and you have a much more liberal conception of the importance of externals, whereas we in Finland are a little more pietistically inclined. There is one quality which is very definitely common to both the Seminary at Helsinki and the Seminary at Philadelphia. We have an expression in Finnish which can be best translated, "Take it with loose wrists." Now I don't want to question the scholarship in either institution. I would like, however, to commend the student bodies of both seminaries for resisting the ever-present professorial prod for violent absorption of knowledge. This can result in intellectual indigestion rather than the more rewarding and healthful method of "taking it with loose wrists!"

PENTTI PALONEN.

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A new ministry is in the making, with a new-old theology of positive Christian convictions. And with such a ministry we may expect a new church to arise, a church competent to speak to this age the one Name that is able to redeem its lost soul.

Editorial in *The Christian Century*

Secularism is bankrupt, sectarianism is a sacrilege, science is suspect — its cult of magic cannot save us from disintegration and disaster. Only the vital mind, the spiritual mind, the magnanimous heart, the merciful and skillful hand can take our wild and crumbling world and reshape it after a new pattern.

Joseph Fort Newton

# A WORLD CHURCH

*"First of all, I ask that men make no reference to my name, and call themselves not Lutherans but Christians. What is Luther? My doctrine, I am sure, is not mine, nor have I been crucified for anyone. St. Paul in I Corinthians iii, would not allow Christians to call themselves Pauline, or Petrine, but Christian. How then should I, poor foul carcass that I am, come to have men give to the children of Christ a name derived from my worthless name? No, no, my friends; let us abolish all party names, and call ourselves Christians after Him Whose doctrine we have." (Luther)*

\* \* \*

It is interesting to think what Luther would say to us if he could visit our "Lutheran" churches in America today. How proud we are that we are Lutherans and how skeptical of Christians by any other name. It is right that we should be proud of our heritage and study carefully our distinctive emphases and teachings. Yet, how shameful, stagnating, and perverting that we place our differences in emphasis and teaching first in all of our church life and work, and shut ourselves off from the general world of Christian thought and fellowship. We forget that we are Christians first and Lutherans second. Many of us think in terms of the universal Lutheran Church, and neglect the universal Christian Church, while actually our Lutheran World Fellowship is enveloped by a Christian world fellowship. We are baptized into a world fellowship the whole of which prays to One God, is saved, nurtured, and judged by One God. Luther identified himself and his followers

with this whole. Most of us have made our denomination a separate part of the whole in theory, and in practice have allowed it to become the whole.

This partition of the Fellowship is, of course, not peculiar to Lutheranism. Most of Protestantism has followed denominational thinking to the brink of bankruptcy.

We have shut ourselves up in little groups to protect our gleams of light and have succeeded in creating a staleness which has nearly extinguished the whole. Each has nurtured and developed a loyalty to its own insights which has often turned to jealousy and hatred. There is no need to prove the tension and suspicion with which we hold one another today, for our enemies will not let us forget and God drives us to our knees in repentance for our lack of Christian love and fellowship.

In a single generation Protestantism has seen a great turning back from this trend. We have learned much in the history of our



denominational life that will never be given up, and yet we have missed the fellowship of the Universal Church. "The Little Church needs the Great Church. The Great Church needs the Little Church. The Church of God in its wholeness cries out for a rebirth and a revival." (Theodore Wedel)

This trend or change in thinking is truly a "movement." No organization has forced it into being. No one section of the world or section of the church has founded it. It is a mighty ideal which comes as a spring of water from many fissures in the status quo and is moving like a mighty wave over all, and men everywhere are being engulfed by the great ideal of Christian Unity—of worshipping and working together.

This ideal is of course best known in the great world gatherings of Christians. Mission groups have met in Edinburgh, Jerusalem, Madras, and will meet this year in Canada. The Stockholm and Oxford conferences on Life and Work, the youth conferences of Amsterdam and, this year, Oslo, the Lausanne and Edinburgh conferences on Faith and Order, the coming World Council of Churches, the International YMCA, and many others, together with the dozens of smaller meetings which have prepared for these great ones, are all ecumenical landmarks. The ideal has long been expressed in our great common fund of hymnody, by the present

and past efforts for union among denominations, by statements by our own leaders and those of other denominations expressing the need for this unity, and by our growing ability to work together in war and peace. The ideal is finding expression in many forms, in many places, and in many people. It is broadening our vision and enriching our lives. Ecumenics are being taught in our schools, the Nature of The Church is receiving new emphasis in our theology, we are arriving at a new appreciation for tradition, and in particular for liturgical tradition, and we are searching again for world-wide Christian fellowship and communion.

Why such unity? To hold back the Roman Catholics or Communists? To fight social evils? To provide a more solid lobby in the governments of the world? To stop war? Because organization is a good in itself? Rubbish! And dangerous rubbish at that. The Movement toward Christian unity is valid only upon the sincere belief that it is God's will. The Hebrews were a people-Church. It was a people with whom God had a covenant and the Jew entered the covenant not as an individual but as a part of the people of God. The Holy Spirit came to The Church, The Church is the Body of Christ, Luther believed "that there is on earth, through the whole wide world, no more than one holy, common, Christian Church, which is nothing else than the congregation, or assem-

bly of the saints, i.e., the pious, believing men on earth, . . ." Indeed, the Ecumenical Ideal springs from Christianity itself.

We have explained our present denominational positions by pointing out that The Church exists wherever the Word is preached and the Sacraments administered. In doing so we have lost the idea of The Great Church and have been content with something less than the great ideal of Christian unity and fellowship on earth. Theodore Wedel has written on this point in the following manner:

"The Church as a mighty commonwealth of God, universal, holy, with a majestic history, with divine sanctions of its own superseding those of any fractional grouping—such a concept is not vividly imagined. If the ecumenical movement should bring the idea of the universal Church into the foreground of Protestant thinking once more, a revolution would loom ahead."

Once we have seen that this movement finds its motivation solely within Christianity itself, we must also admit that it can, because of the unity achieved, be of practical value in the whole life of The Church.

Not only can unity in a town or city help to develop fellowship and love among all of the Christians, but the churches have a distinct advantage in dealing with social and religious problems. The town can be canvassed in a joint campaign, city wide religious education can be promoted and correlated, specific ordinances can

be supported, city wide youth programs can be developed, and prominent social evils can be approached in a way not possible without such unity. The Federal Council of Churches is an example of what can be done on a nation wide basis. Mount Airy men are well familiar with the work of the Commission on a Just and Durable Peace. The Industrial Relations Division, and the Commission on the Ministry, both of the Federal Council, serve equally important functions in our Church life. National and International Missions organizations have already shown the value of united action and study in that field. The new Commission on International Affairs of the World Council and the International Missionary Council is in a position to render the World Church an invaluable service in relating our Christian way of life to the temporal problems of world order. Certainly one of the most telling examples of what Christian unity can mean in a practical way is the study that has been done. Every international conference of the Churches is preceded by study programs which are prepared and studied throughout the world. Studies are written at the conferences and commissions are established to continue the work. Some of the most significant thought in our day is a direct result of this movement toward Christian unity. While these practical aspects are not the primary justification for Chris-

tian unity, the value of such unity in our world is inescapable.

I would say a brief word about the ecumenical method. One of the most heard objections to the movement is that we are asked to give up things which we hold dear and to unite on a lowest common denominator. This is of course a danger. However, it is possible to emphasize those things which we hold in common with others, and from that point attempt to understand and appreciate our differences. We can never achieve true unity by feigning to give up things upon which our existence is based. On the other hand, these precious emphases can never be allowed to remain shrouded by ignorance, indifference and neglect. It is said that sterling silverware should never be reserved for special occasions, but that it is most beautiful when used regularly and allowed to become worn. Certainly our precious truths must be wrestled with and challenged and become well known and used if they are to be living monuments to the man who re-discovered them. Remaining aloof from ecumenical discussions will neither protect nor foster our particular insights. We must be present at the discussion table and take part in the give and take. It will make our thinking vital, it will provide a witness to the world, and it will help us separate our gold from our 'fool's gold.' Are we afraid of contamination? What has happened to our vitality and courage! The World

Church needs our witness and we need the challenge and the power which is beginning to flow in the veins of the World Church. We must maintain essential Lutheran teachings, but it can never be done by holding aloof from the movement toward Christian unity.

A seminary Dean recently remarked that seminary students were a bunch of dodos, alive only to the extent that they walk about. What an indictment! It was students that led much of Germany's 19th century revolution. It was students who began and carried through the great missionary enterprises of the 19th century. It was students who were among the first to protest social and political evils in our own land, including the problems in Georgia. Students have an important part to play in the movement toward Christian unity. This is no time for dodos!

First of all, the movement will need leaders in the future. These leaders are now in our seminaries and it is there that they must be touched by this broader vision of the Great Church. The problems of unity must be thought through, the history of the movement must be studied, and above all, we must have an opportunity to experience Christian fellowship over denominational lines. The practice of maintaining denominational incubators with plenty of insulation against 'outside' influence must be modified to allow for a training which will fit men for the min-

istry in The Great Church first, and then for the denomination. We must have enlightened leaders for the World Christian Fellowship.

Secondly, the movement toward church unity must reach the parish level. Angus Dun has written:

"The greatest weakness of the movement for Christian unity to date is that it has been the concern of so few persons and has reached down so little into the thought and feeling of the general membership of the Churches."

Making the ecumenical movement real for the people of the churches must be the job of the minister in the parish. This demands that the man in the seminary now be able to experience The Great Church and to know the problems it faces and the ideal which it expresses. Unless we are trained now to build the foundation for the ecumenical movement in the parish, the movement faces the peril of remaining a bureaucratic hierarchy of specialists.

The Interseminary Movement is one organization which is trying to fill these two needs. Through conferences, literature, speakers, and personal contacts, it allows seminary students to experience common worship and fellowship with other Christians and to provide a means for self-education in Ecumenical Christianity. It is a student movement with all of the strengths and

weaknesses of student planned programs and development. While its influence is limited, it is significant that this year the Deans in well over one hundred schools will have been interviewed by two student secretaries on behalf of Interseminary work, more than two hundred separate addresses will be made to seminary groups by student secretaries, most of the seminary student bodies in the country will be addressed by one of their own members concerning the work of the Movement, six or more large regional conferences will be held, many small area conferences will meet, a week long, 1000 delegate, National Conference will meet in June, numerous addresses will be made to seminary groups by national ecumenical leaders, and countless pieces of literature and student written Newsletters will be distributed.

In spite of this work many seminary students are not aware of, nor interested in, the significance of the movement toward Christian unity. The movement demands and deserves our prayerful consideration and study. As Lutherans we have a contribution which is needed. As men of Mounty Airy we must prepare ourselves now to take our place in ecumenical councils on all levels and to make an intelligent contribution to the ecumenical movement.

JOHN W. VANNORSDALL.

# A Lenten Meditation

In the soft Eastern night, twelve figures, in two's and three's, wended their way along a familiar, dew-moistened path. The small stream, but lately crossed, flowed aimlessly between its banks, while the moon shone fitfully from behind passing clouds. Ahead of the group loomed a cluster of twisted trees, raising confused branches heavenward. The silence was troubled only by the sighing of the wind in the leaves. Then One of the group halted, spoke softly to the others, and with the three nearest Him, disappeared into the grove. Out of the darkness came a voice:

*"Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt."*

\* \* \*

From the depths of His Being, in the gloom of that garden, the Son of Man laid bare His heart before the throne of His Father. There was no one in this world to comfort Him; even His closest friends were asleep in this His hour of sorest need. They were indifferent and unconcerned in their ignorance. They could not guess what horror lay ahead for their beloved Master. The only difference between them and us is that we sleep in seeming indifference from choice, knowing what was in store, knowing the redemptive power of that Sacrifice. We display our indifference by the lives we lead. For us, the balance of our choice is tilted in favor of the world rather than in favor of our Savior. We go out of our way to be approved by the world and the devil. Anything

that might mark us as Christian is religiously avoided. We refuse to witness for Christ because that would be wearing our faith on our sleeve! Our 'religion' is saved for Sundays; it would indicate weakness to display it any other time before our friends, who happen to be either of another communion, or unchurched entirely. And then, anyway, we choose only to believe what pleases us or what to our feeble minds seems rational. We want to be "broad-minded." (God have mercy on us!) It is not possible to ride half-a-dozen horses at one time! Either we believe what is truth, or we do not believe anything. If it is the latter, then we should have the strength of our convictions and abandon the Church for our own perverted ideas.

The Holy Season of Lent is a

time for quietness and meditation upon the Passion, a time to contemplate our own wickedness and purge ourselves. There is no better time to make our peace with God, and show by our living that we fear, love and trust in Him above all things. The story of Jesus' suffering in the Garden alone should make us want to do this. But how excruciating that agony, how telling those drops of blood falling from the Sacred Head, can be appreciated only by the eyes of faith. The God-man, Jesus, in whom was nothing but perfection, trembled at the thought of the exclusion from fellowship with God that He must experience on the cruel cross of Calvary. The sacrifice He was about to make was to be the Supreme one of all time. Even nature was to shudder at the spectacle. But His love for His creature, man, was so complete that He submitted Himself to the torment, as He had promised to do from eternity. All this the Lord of Heaven and Earth was willing to do for His sinful, ungrateful creation.

Again in this Holy Season we are reminded, forcefully, of that Sacrifice. We should fall to our knees — yes, grovel in the dust — in humble adoration of the One who gave Himself that we might

inherit eternal life. And in gratitude, our lives should reflect the love of our Master. But we are a stiff-necked generation—proud in our own conceit, willing to give lip-service, yet ashamed and too cowardly to let Jesus take complete and utter possession of our lives. He is a cloak that can be put off and on as we please. When God trembles at the penalty for sin, how much more should we, in our ignorance, abhor the thought of the price we may be called upon to pay one day. Let us not deceive ourselves; if we want to dance, we must pay the fiddler. And that fiddler is no one save the Prince of Darkness.

As we hear again, in the reading of the Passion, the story of our redemption, let us resolve in our hearts that we shall henceforth abandon ourselves, all that we have and are, to the everlasting arms of our Blessed Lord. Only then can we hope for the peace that passeth all understanding; only then can we feel Him walking with us on our way, sharing our joys, comforting and sustaining us in time of trouble.

*“Lo, I am with you always,  
even unto the end of the  
world.”*

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Our problem is not to see how little we can believe but what great things we can see in the Christian message and make real to the world that desperately needs them.. This is a great time for great convictions.

Harry Emerson Fosdick

# Let's Publish the Banns!

Aren't we the sentimentalists though? I have a younger brother. For a number of years I man-handled him. "If I want to beat the kid up, all right; but I dare you to lay a finger on him!" That feeling is proper in some places but it can be carried to ridiculous extremes. "Ah, Mount Airy has a two by four campus. The student body is nothing but a bunch of cliques. The buildings are museum pieces! What's that you say? Unite with Gettysburg? Go someplace else? No more Mount Airy? Why, man, you're mad! That's God's little acre in Philly."

And any man from Gettysburg will react much the same: "This place is too far out in the sticks; you spend half the night walking into town for a cup of coffee. You have to get up before the sun on Sundays to make a sixty mile trip to Baltimore! Why did we come to school — to wade through hay? Unite with Mount Airy? And give up Gettysburg? Why this is the oldest Protestant Seminary in the country—founded 1826! We should give up that heritage just to unite with Mount Airy—you're out of your mind! Look at our chapel. Look at our Library. We should leave them for the cows? Why the Church of the Abiding Presence is being copied all over the country. Never will we give up our campus just to unite with Mount Airy!"

But is it "just to unite with—"? Years of graduates give their allegiance to this school or that. It is like a girl packing to leave the dorm which has been her home for four years. She packs most carefully. "Let's see—I've got all Bill's letters here; Dick's?—yes here they are. Dance programs? Pictures? Yes, all packed." Nothing is missed—except her shoes. Meticulous care and strong devotion for inconsequential! In the ministry we don't "do or die" for Mount Airy, or for Gettysburg—at least that ought not be the case. We ought to be doing for God who saw fit to renounce divine prerogatives to enter this tender, torturing, satisfying, suffering, we call Life, for us; that we might "through him be saved."

The school loyalties are a natural growth; they are, indeed, a necessity; but neither they, nor the childish politics existing between synods ought be allowed to hinder the church's task of bringing Salvation to man.

Would not a seminary with a twenty five or thirty man faculty and a student body of two to three hundred, backed by the United Lutheran Church in America have greater potentialities than the two and a half seminaries we have here in the East? Such an institution situated thirty to forty minutes from the heart of a metropolitan city with its

immense potential training fields, hospitals, old folks homes, prisons, asylums, slums, juvenile courts, mission churches, in addition to many readily accessible churches, has something of real value. The Pastorate is the primary field for the minister, but there are many who desire to dedicate their lives to Christ who simply do not fit in that job. At the same time there are other fields where ministers are needed and for which the Lutheran Church does not adequately prepare its men: Inner Mission work, publications, Industrial and Military Chaplaincies, Personal Counselors, Student Pastors, to say nothing of Theologians. A larger school with its larger facilities could train men for these tasks.

With the combined appropriations of five synods an academic standing could be attained which would be a credit to the church. Through its top notch graduate school an even greater influence would be had not only in Lutheran, but in all Evangelical circles.

It is possible to have too small a school as it is possible to have one

too large. In a small group differences have a tendency to become personal friction which in a larger group would remain abstractions. Yet the student body that would attend the united school, provided there is no attempt to skimp in professors, would not exceed the point at which professor-student relations are on a personal basis.

If only for financial purposes it would seem the more sensible thing to have one rather than two and a half seminaries. There would no longer be such conditions as exist in the New York and Pittsburgh Synods, where they are trying to support two schools and are unable to support either one as it ought to be. The difference in the sum necessary to support one instead of three physical plants would allow giving the faculty the raise they rate.

Forget sentimentalism for a while; forget politics for good; try to look at the situation from the third person and see if the uniting of all our resources into one unit does not merit action.

WILLIAM H. SNYDER.

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In the last analysis the ecumenical Church will depend on the individual Christian. Will there be a large enough company of men and women with the necessary quality of faith and life and witness to carry forward this great work already nobly begun?

W. Stanley Rycroft



# Choirs Can't Sing

Within the next three years almost all of us who are now students in the seminary will begin our ministerial careers by becoming pastors of small congregations in which the music is led by amateur choirs made up of volunteer singers with little or no musical training. These choirs are usually directed by persons with some musical background but with little experience in providing music for the church services. It is imperative, therefore, that the pastor know something about the proper position of music in the church that these directors and their choirs might be used to best advantage in the services.

The work of a choir may be divided into three classifications. First and most important is to lead in the singing of the hymns and the services of the church. The second work, in order of importance, is a function of the choir which is quite commonly neglected, namely, performing the musical propers of the Service. The performance of solos and anthems, which is now given the most attention by choirs, is the least important duty.

No choir is worth its keep unless it can sing the services of the church and the hymns in the manner in which they should be sung. How often this function of the choir is neglected can be demonstrated by the quite common in-

correct singing of the "Gloria in Excelsis" in which a C-sharp is substituted for the prescribed C-natural ("O Lord God, heav'nly King"). This is neither musically correct nor does it make any sense according to the words. It is the pastor's duty to see that the Service is periodically rehearsed and performed correctly. This applies to the hymns which are to be used as well as to the Services. Any hymns that are to be used should be rehearsed until they are well known to the choir. Unfamiliar hymns should be rehearsed especially. If the choir cannot sing the hymns and services correctly and with confidence, the singing of the congregation will be correspondingly weak. Likewise, strong singing on the part of the choir will be reflected in the singing of the congregation.

When the renditions of the services and hymns reach the desired standards, work should be started on the musical Propers, which consist of the Introits and Graduals, and which, like the other Propers, vary with the Sundays.

Today the Introit is commonly read by the minister, a practice that is at variance with the historical rendering of the Introit. Hugo Leichtentritt defines the Introit as "liturgical choir-singing accompanying the entrance of the priests." Luther retained the In-

troit in his *Formula Missae* and directed that it should be sung by the minister and the choir. From their historical usage, they should be sung.

The Gradual has passed out of use in many of our churches today. Of its historical derivation, Leichtentritt writes, "The Gradual is sung by the cantor and the *schola* (choir) after prayers and readings from the Bible. It got its name from the steps (*gradus*) on the platform (*ambo*) on which the singers stood. It is followed by the jubilant *Alleluia*. On days of mourning the Gradual is replaced by the wailing Tract, sung in one long drawn-out (*trahere*) strain." We have retained these characteristics of the Gradual, incorporating the *Alleluia* in the Gradual itself and using the Tract in place of the Gradual during Lent.

Many pastors use as an excuse for not singing the Introits and Graduals the fact that modern choirs and modern congregations are not able to do justice to Gregorian chants. This would be a perfectly valid excuse were it not that we have some fine modern settings for these musical Propers. Perhaps the most satisfactory setting of the Introits and Graduals for the average volunteer choir is the two volume edition with music by the organist of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, H. Alexander Matthews. In his settings of the Introits, Dr. Matthews has allotted the Antiphon to a solo voice and

the Psalm is sung by the full choir. The music is simple, the range quite comfortable for any voice. If solo voices are not available, the Antiphons may be sung by the full choir in unison. The Graduals are set to a form of chant which is easily mastered when one becomes acquainted with the form. The simple structure of the H. Alexander Matthews settings coupled with the fact that one becomes acquainted with them after singing them for years, adds up to make these Introits and Graduals a wealth of liturgical music well within the range of the average volunteer choir.

The third function of the church choir, which should be omitted unless the services, hymns, Introits and Graduals are satisfactorily rendered, is the performance of anthems and special music not directly connected with the church services.

Selecting anthems should be a matter of great concern to the pastor of a church. The content of every anthem that is sung should first be approved by the pastor and should be appropriate for the season of the Church Year and the Propers for the day. Christmas anthems have been sung in Lent and many other absurd things have happened due to a lack of vigilance on the part of the pastors. One case about which I know is one in which a pastor saved himself a great deal of trouble in his church by casting his veto against an anthem.

For the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Women's Missionary Society in his church, the choir director had chosen, "Now the Day Is Over." Had that been sung, there would definitely have been trouble.

Much money has been wasted by churches in purchasing choir music of little or no value. Much of this money could be saved if the pastors would interest themselves in what is good and permanent music and what is bad and waste music. Ordinarily collections of anthems should be avoided. There is so much bad music included with the good music in collections, that often one must pay much too much for one or two good anthems. Good anthems in collections are always available singly and are much more satisfactory and economical if purchased in that way. The St. Olaf series is perhaps the best collection for Lutheran use, but even there, the finest anthems are available individually. Publications put out by the mass production publishing houses are to be completely avoided if one is to keep from throwing the church's money down the gutter. Also to be avoided are the choir magazines (graded for the abilities of various choirs) which are published on a monthly bases. Many choir directors seem to love this system, perhaps because it cuts their work to a minimum. The original anthems are of a very low grade and the anthems by the master composers are simply ar-

rangements of secular compositions which have no place in the services of the church.

There is no substitute for good judgment in the selection of anthems but having ripped apart a whole group of anthems, I feel obligated to present a few anthems which seem to have a place in the Lutheran Church. In criticizing collections of anthems, I did not mean to criticize some collections of anthems by the great masters. One of the finest sources of anthems is the collection of Responsories in the musical settings composed specifically for the Lutheran Church by that great modern Roman Catholic composer, Max Reger. These Responsories are not easy for the average choir, but they are very effective. If a choir really works, it can perform these Responsories in a most acceptable manner. Bach chorals are also a rich source for suitable anthems. Another rich source of anthems is a group composed by the up-and-coming English school of composition headed by such masters as Ralph Vaughan-Williams, Gustav Holst and Sir H. Walford Davies. The nineteenth-century English and American composers, whose compositions form the backbone of most choir libraries, wrote much music that is acceptable but not always of top quality. A great treasury of church compositions that has hardly been tapped is found in the work of Henry Purcell and his contemporaries. Purcell was a really great English

composer of seventeenth century, who devoted a great deal of his efforts to improving the English church music. His influence can be traced down through William Boyce, who was another great church composer. One of the most accessible of Purcell's anthems is the anthem "Rejoice in the Lord alway" (Published by E. C. Schirmer). This anthem is the best that I know for a small, amateur choir.

Anthems may be selected from lists which the publishers will be happy to supply. Many publishers will also send anthems on approval which is really the ideal situation for it gives one a chance to look over the anthems very carefully and minimizes the chances for a bad selection.

In the performance of choir mu-

sic, the pastor should encourage the choir to perform its music *a cappella*. A small group is much more effective when singing this way as there is not the strong competition of the organ which often blots out the singing entirely. The Graduals, the Reger Responsories and such music becomes much more effective when done *a cappella*.

In conclusion, it seems that there is a great need for raising the musical standards in our churches and if this is to be done, the initiative must be taken by the pastors themselves. The pastors must know church music, its history and use, if they are to prove effective in guiding our music directors toward better church music.

JAMES G. HORN.

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Christianity did not set out to conquer the Roman Empire, though it did in fact do so.

Christianity did not set out to salvage the values of Graeco-Roman civilization, though it did in fact do so.

Christianity did not set out to make itself the core, the energizing center, of mankind's greatest organic culture, though in fact it became that.

Christianity did not set out to become a world-embracing Society, a World Community, though in fact it became that.

Christianity did not set out to create an organism and a structure which should alone hold the peoples of the earth together, though that is what it is today.

Henry P. Van Dusen in *What is the Church Doing?*

# Lutheran Interseminary Fellowship

*We have heard much recently of the Interseminary Movement and its program for furthering the ecumenical spirit among theological students. This is a relatively new venture, and an important and valuable movement in the life of the theological student and of the whole church. On the other hand, we have heard very little about Lutheran Interseminary Fellowship. It is the purpose of this article (1) to recount some recent beginnings in such a venture and (2) to indicate some further possibilities and plans for continuing and extending such endeavors.*

## I

Early in January of 1946 the Concordia Society of the Augustana (Swedish) Lutheran Seminary sent a questionnaire letter to all of the Lutheran Seminaries west of the Mississippi River. This letter stated an interest and a desire to promote fellowship and understanding among Lutheran seminarians in the Western states. In order to make this desire concrete, it was stated that the Augustana Seminary would like to act as host to a Lutheran Interseminary Conference, if such a proposal would meet with the desire and interest of other Lutheran Seminaries. An encouraging response was received and immediately all Lutheran Seminaries in this area were invited to meet on the Augustana campus, on Feb. 26, 1946.

On this historic date delegates from nine different Seminaries, representing seven separate Lutheran Church bodies, met in the city of Rock Island, Illinois, to

convene what has become the first permanent Lutheran Interseminary organization.

It was a fascinating experience to enter the beautiful reception-registration room and to see over thirty delegates from nine different Seminaries assembling in anticipation of this new venture. Some of the delegates had traveled a distance of almost 1,000 miles to be present at this Conference. The schools represented were Western, Chicago, and Northwestern of the United Lutheran Church in America; Luther Seminary of the Norwegian Lutheran Church; Wartburg Seminary of the American Lutheran Church; Suomi Seminary of the Finnish Lutheran Church; Trinity Seminary of the Danish United Lutheran Church; Grand View Theological Seminary of the Danish Synod; and Augustana Theological Seminary of the Augustana Lutheran Church.

We were warmly welcomed by Luther Livingstone, who had for-

merly studied at Mount Airy Seminary and was at the time of the Conference a Senior at Augustana and President of the Concordia Society. He stated the purpose of the Conference, "to stimulate fellowship and understanding among the students of Lutheran Seminaries and to endeavor to effect a permanent student organization of Lutheran Seminaries in the United States as a factor in creating Lutheran unity."

The Conference was opened with a banquet at the Seminary Commons. This was followed by a Panel Discussion on "Lutheran Unity." The first speaker was Dr. Eric Wahlstrom, Professor of the New Testament at the Augustana Seminary. The title of his address was "The Lutheran Church and the Ecumenical Movement." The speaker traced the development and history of the world Ecumenical Movement which had its inception at the Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1910. Dr. Wahlstrom presented three reasons for the origin of the Ecumenical Movement:

1. the growing consciousness of "One World".
2. the importance of the Church in modern problems;
3. the changing conception of the Church from the Body of Christians to Body of Christ.

It was further pointed out that

the Ecumenical Movement had produced three fundamental results: (1) the realization of the concept of *The Church* as over against the churches; (2) a growing awareness that differences lie in our understanding of the nature of the Gospel and not so much on external matters; (3) a growing conviction that *Unity* not *Union* is the goal.

The next speaker was Dr. E. E. Ryden, Editor of the *Lutheran Companion*, who spoke on "A Churchman Looks at the Lutheran Church." In speaking of the imperative need for unity, he pointed out the fact that not since the Reformation has our church faced the crisis it faces today in Europe and this demands unity among the Lutheran groups in America. It is through the National Lutheran Council that we must look for this ultimate unity, if not union, of the Lutheran bodies in America. Further, we must be concerned with the world and national problems which face us today, and we as a Lutheran Church must make a distinct contribution and impact on American society. These can be accomplished most effectively through unified action.

After this stimulating panel discussion there followed a Social Hour at which time the faculty members of Augustana Seminary were introduced to the group. This extremely refreshing day concluded with a Vespers Service in the Chapel.

The following day after luncheon, Dr. O. N. Olson, a former leader of the National Lutheran Council, discussed the history and activity of this organization. The conference closed with a student panel discussion on the "Future of Lutheran Inter-Seminary Fellowship." At this discussion the delegates enthusiastically and unanimously decided formally to organize a permanent organization, calling it "The Lutheran Inter-Seminary Fellowship." This group was to meet in annual conferences on the campuses of the member Seminaries. It was also proposed that the organization contact the Lutheran Seminaries East of the Mississippi suggesting that they form a like organization in their area, and that ultimately a National Organization be effected.

The purposes of the Annual Conferences would be: 1) to discuss common seminary student problems; (2) to come to an understanding of the individual synodical problems; (3) to study and discuss methods and means of procuring a stronger unity among the Lutheran Churches of America.

## II

Thus a new venture in promoting Lutheran fellowship and unity has begun. From all indications this movement will grow, and make its contribution towards establishing a much needed solidarity among the Lutheran Churches in America.

The question now arises: What can Mount Airy Seminary do to further the start which has been made in extending Lutheran unity and fellowship among seminarians? What part can we play in endeavoring to further, here in the East, the commendable work which has already been started among our western seminaries.

Delegates, who have attended meetings of the Middle Atlantic Region of the Interseminary Movement, from Gettysburg and Mount Airy Seminaries have felt that some definite steps should be taken by these two schools toward the actualization of closer unity. As a consequence of such thoughts, we at Mount Airy have extended an invitation to the students at Gettysburg Seminary, asking a group from their student body to visit with us for several days.

It is hoped that this informal meeting of students from Gettysburg and Mount Airy may possibly result in the formation of some permanent organization to further advance Inter-Lutheran Fellowship among these two-seminaries and others in the East. It is further desired that such cooperation among Lutheran seminaries in the East may ultimately lead to a National Lutheran Inter-Seminary organization, which will be a primary factor in creating and developing a greater unity among all branches of the Lutheran Church in America.

ERIC SIGMAR.

## Contributors to this Issue

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