

KRAUTH MEMORIAL LIBRARY  
LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
MT. AIRY, PENNSYLVANIA

# SEMINARIAN

Vol. XXIII

All Saints Day

No. 9

## LUTHERANS MAY LOWER AGE FOR FIRST COMMUNICANTS

Next June will mark the formation of the Lutheran Church in America. An 11-member commission, representing the four parties to the merger, may well recommend to the constituting convention that children be given Holy Communion before confirmation. The commission is studying the theology of confirmation and the relationship between confirmation and the Lord's Supper.

According to one member of the commission, the change, while dramatic, would not express simply a desire to change existing conditions. "There is a lot of theological division," he said, "both in the United States and in Europe on what confirmation means ... The most significant practical problem is the age at which children should be confirmed." There is no question, he stated, that admission of a child into the Church is through Holy Baptism, and that confirmation cannot be considered theologically necessary.

Two concerns have caused the commission to study existing practice. First, it has been suggested that children are no less ready to receive first Communion between the ages of 7 and 12 (the period suggested by the commission) than at the usual age of confirmation. Second, it is the opinion of many people that confirmation comes at a time when children are exceedingly unstable and less ready to make important commitments than at other times. The commission may suggest that confirmation be postponed until mid-teens or later.

The commission will convene for its second session in Chicago, November 3-4.

PH: Sorrow is good, more sorrow is better.

PH: One nation, under God.

## rites for Dr. Fisher Held

On Wednesday, October 25, the funeral of Dr. Emil E. Fisher was held in the Seminary Chapel. The service was conducted by Dr. John Newpher, pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church, of which Dr. Fisher was a member. He was assisted by the Rev. Dr. Henry Baggar and the Rev. Dr. Samuel Kidd, President of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, who preached the sermon.

Dr. Fisher, Senior of the Ministerium at the time of his death, had served as the president of the synod from 1943-53. He was graduated from Rutgers University in 1904, this seminary in 1907, and served pastorates at Holy Trinity Church, Brooklyn, New York, and Christ Church, Allentown before being called as a professor to Mt. Airy in 1920. He remained a professor until his election to the highest synodical office.

The regard in which Dr. Fisher was held by members of his synod was attested to by the number of clergy and deaconesses who filled the sanctuary in tribute to this church leader.

## FIRST SYMPOSIUM ANNOUNCED

This evening at 8 o'clock in room 1 of Hagen Hall the Symposium Committee will present its first program of the year. At this time a local unit of Alcoholics Anonymous will conduct a typical meeting, which will be followed by a question and answer period. An informal discussion over a cup of coffee will conclude the evening's activities.

The Committee feels that here is a real opportunity for us all to learn something of this important organization and its work.

Students, faculty and guests are welcome.

## HEYER COMMISSION TO MEET

Larry Schell, chairman of the Heyer Commission has announced two future meeting dates. On November 9, Dr. Voehringer will address the group on Latin America, and on December 7, there will be the annual Christmas Party. This year's topic is British Guiana.

## UNITY



The Reformation was not a mistake! As we celebrate the anniversary of Luther's signal revolt let us be absolutely clear: this was not the wrong thing to do. But it happened four hundred years ago.

The ecumanic would be deranged indeed who wished to rewrite history, as sad as it may be. He is certainly foolish who would like to forget that things really were so bad once in the Church that so violent a rebuttal had to be made. But we simply do not live in the sixteenth century.

The dictum "semper reformanda", the Church must constantly be reformed, is so far from meaning that the battles of the sixteenth century must be re-enacted in every age, that quite the opposite effect may be elicited by it. Today it is the ecumenical movement which is carrying on the reformation of the Church in continuing that effort; of which Luther's work was a part, of purifying and enlightening the whole Church.

The Reformation, far from being a mistake, was the unfortunately necessary shock by which the Church could become conscious once more of its role and responsibility. This reformation task is, however, incomplete until all Christians benefit by it and are reunited in the truth which it champions.

And so, the ecumenical movement, far from being a search for cozy comfortability in togetherness, is the prophetic voice in revolt against denominational complaisance. It too is unfortunately necessary-unfortunate because it is painful to meet others on equal footing, unfortunate because it may involve a parting of the ways with one's officialdom, as it did in Luther's time; but necessary because the Christian is striving to make Christ manifest in this world and He is only parodied in the conflict of the churches.

Geddes MacGregor has written a book entitled, The Coming Reformation; just published in English is a collection of writings coming out of Germany's Sammlung movement, called The Unfinished (continued on p.3, column 2.)

## COMMON DECENCY

Usually this column concerns itself with the reports from the Department of Press, Radio, and Television of the ULCA. However, occasionally comments are made on situations relevant to the campus itself. This is such a column.

I could be very verbose, or I could assert Christian ethics in the problem to which I am speaking-namely, balloon-throwing-although I must admit, I might have difficulty using the latter approach. I have, however, decided on neither of these courses but rather will resort to plain and simple bluntness.

A week or so ago the Vice-President of the Student Body had occasion to remark that balloon-throwing in the Main Dorm was getting out of hand. This perhaps was the understatement of the year! Now in addition to the traditional water-filled balloons being thrown, we have tomatoes and eggs. Indeed, it can be argued that such missile-launching is fun for the participants. However, for the individual who happens into the line of fire, it can hardly be termed fun!

Still another problem results-here I am speaking of the mess that now exists in the courtyard. The egg has been on the crosswalk for four days. The grass looks like a garbage dump.

The Vice-President suggested that "warfare" be limited to water and to daylight hours. Also, he requested that students dressed in suits or sports clothes not be made targets. Permit me to add another request-that those making the mess clean it up.

Of course, who wants to have fun according to rules? We live by the gospel, not by the law. We can't throw balloons according to regulations. It's no fun that way.

GOOD. MAYBE IT'LL STOP ALTOGETHER!

PH: The verb is the enemy of the noun.

PH: Worship the theory of your choice this Sunday.

PH: A rolling stone gets places.

PH: Everyone should be married.

PH: The Communion is only another form of the Word.

VALEDICTORY TO THE WOODEN SOLDIERS

You are all finished. I have done well with you. Much better than I had thought. There is expression in your wooden faces; there is laughter; the right kind of laughter, not boisterous, not scornful, not smug, not complacent, not cynical, but my kind of laughter. And there is wisdom in those eyes. How many hours, how many months, until it worked its way into the grain, and became a part of it. A discerning wisdom. Imaginative. Daring. Creative. Like my own.

And now you are ready for the world. Do not let them call you puppets. Tin soldiers. I have taught you to think. Creatively. Boldly. Honestly. You can think for yourselves. You are not puppets. You think as I do.

But the world will not treat you kindly. They will say you are only wood, and you will answer that you are different. They will say I have tricked you, and you will answer that I have taught you. They will say that I have not told you how things really are. But I have told you about the world, and you wrote it down, and you know it.

You are wood. You have grown above the ground and not beneath it. And you are their masters. You have laughed when I have laughed. You have asked what I have asked. You are ready. Are you afraid, little soldiers? I have taught you to be afraid. Fear is good. It is cleansing. It is humbling. I, too, have been afraid.

Go your way, then. You are all finished. I have done well with you. Much better than I had thought. And I am busy. Very busy.

(This unusual piece was written for The Seminarian by a 1961 graduate, Leon Phillips. Students are encouraged (1) to express their thoughts and feelings in prose and poetry as well as other media, and (2) to submit these for publication. The staff will be glad to work with any student to perfect his writing. Office hours in E-51 are Monday, 1:30-2:30, and Tuesday, 12:30-3:00.)

## ALL SAINTS DAY SERVICE TO BE HELD

On Wednesday, November 1, at 7:30 p.m. there will be a service of Holy Communion at Emanuel Lutheran Church, Fourth and Carpenter Sts., Philadelphia. The Russian Choral Society of the Seminary, under the competent direction of Peter S. Olsen, Mus.D., will lead the musical portion of the program. For the service, the Introit and Gradual have been set to traditional Russian tones; as an Offertory anthem Rimsky-Korsakov's setting of the Beatitudes will be sung.

The service is open to all seminarians and faculty. The Rev. Carl Werner is pastor of the church.

## UNITY (continued from page 2)

Reformation. No matter how you word it, the principle remains the same: the Church must be continually reformed. I do not say that the old reformations must be rejected but that they must be continued, and that is not done simply by rehashing the old polemics.

The challenge is ours to make of this generation a significant age of reform, an age when the lifeblood of our heritage can be transfused into the life of the whole Church: the re-formation of the Church.

G. Weckman

## THE SEMINARY HYMNAL

+

...excerpt no. 1.....

1. Now think we all our God  
With Barth, Aulen, and Niebuhr,  
Who wondrous works do write  
In which no idols figure;  
Who from our Savior's arms  
Hath eased us on our way  
To make us doctrinaire  
And keep us such away.
2. All thanks to M'berg Press,  
Our mother, now we offer;  
Professors who now reign  
And share in her rich coffer.  
The one eternal line  
Which Deutschen all adore.  
But thus it never was  
And shall not be much more.