

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

An Excellent Ministry

ADALBERT R. KRETZMANN

The Ecumenical Century and the Parish

ALVIN N. ROGNESS

Lutheranism in American Theological Education

JERALD C. BRAUER

Theological Education and the Special Ministries

C. THOMAS SPITZ

Homiletics

Brief Studies

Book Review

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Editorial ✠

COMMENCEMENT, CONVENTIONS, AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

In some respects this month's *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY* is a continuation of the issue for December 1964, which was prepared in advance to appear at the time of the observance of the 125th anniversary of the founding of Concordia Seminary. The essays presented now represent a selection of the papers and addresses given at the actual celebration on 8 and 9 December 1964.

In distinction from the authors presented in December, however, all of whom are seminary faculty members, the contributors of the current set of anniversary essays are a parish pastor, a church organization executive, a seminary president, and a dean of a university divinity school. Each of the three major Lutheran bodies in the country is represented.

The papers by Alvin Rogness, C. Thomas Spitz, Jr., and Jerald Brauer were read at the theological professors' conference held on 8 December. Adalbert Kretzmann's is a condensed version of his address, delivered at the anniversary banquet attended by what is called the seminary family, that is, board, faculty, service staff members, students, and spouses.

This issue appears shortly after seminary commencement exercises. Its accents on the parish and on special ministries should challenge the attention both of this year's graduates (we hope that it catches up with most of them) and of older alumni, as they observe the new anniversary of the completion of their own seminary studies and their entrance into the work of the church.

Summer is a favorite season for church conventions. Many of the readers of this periodical will be particularly interested in the discussions which will take place at the 45th regular convention of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, to be held at Detroit, Mich., in the latter part of this month. The Missouri Synod has always given a prominent place to theology and ministerial education at its conventions, and this one promises not to be an exception. It is sincerely to be desired that the delegates, especially those from the ranks of the clergy, be alert and well-informed as to what the contemporary issues in theology and theological education really are, so that they can speak and act responsibly on them.

Another church convention that will be watched is that of the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches later in the summer. Confronting the SELC as well as the LCMS is the question of the Lutheran Council in the United States of America, the proposed successor organization to the National Lutheran Council. After all the preparatory work that has been done favorable action on the adoption of the LCUSA constitution is to be expected. The many discussions that have been held, especially at all the 1964

District conventions of the Missouri Synod, have produced much favorable sentiment, and no great opposition has been evident.

Assuming favorable action by the two conventions mentioned and by the convention of The Lutheran Church in America next year (The American Lutheran Church took appropriate action last October), the new council will, God willing, hold its constituting convention in November 1966 and begin operations in January 1967. Aside from the other great anticipated benefits the theological forum provided for by the LCUSA constitution presents an exciting new prospect.

But summer is not only for conventions. It is the best time for clergymen in service to spend a few weeks in concentrated theological study in order to remain abreast, increase their competence, and prepare for the new tasks that lie ahead. The subject of continuing education came up at Concordia's 125th anniversary also. At noon on 9 December upwards of 200 professors, church executives, local clergy and press representatives assembled for an anniversary luncheon at which the presidents of the three major Lutheran bodies engaged in a panel discussion on "Interaction Between Seminary and Church." Two of the comments are apropos here. Dr. Frederick Schioltz of The American Lutheran Church said:

The seminary's ministry should reach out to the pastors in the parishes. Never was it more necessary than now. In the church I serve there has been a sharp increase in the emotional disturbance of pastors during the last two years. In consulting with psychiatrists and psychologists, I am told that this is true also in other vocations. From this we must conclude that we live in a time when people live under excessive pressure situations. As submarines must equalize the pressure from without by increasing the pressure in the cabin, so the pressures of life must be equalized by a strengthened cushioning faith. We shall have to look to our seminaries to provide opportunity for our pastors to come aside and to rest for a while. The renewal of the mind through study and the renewal of the heart in worship and adoration provides a rest.

Dr. Franklin Clark Fry stated:

The church has the right to expect its seminaries to equip men with theology that has feet, feet to walk out into the actual world of men. I grant you that relevance has become a kind of fetish in religious circles lately. It has gone so far that I am often tempted to suspect that some people are looking for social relevance as a kind of compensation for the insecurity they have as to the personal relevance of the Gospel which they have been taught. Whether that reflection is justified or not, any theology that is segregated, from now on is going to be emasculated. Theology needs to breed a faith that can interpenetrate every one of the disciplines of the mind.

The increasing numbers of pastors, professors, chaplains, missionaries, executives, and others that have been enrolling in summer courses bear witness to the fact that the seminary serves both of the purposes mentioned by the two church presidents. In terms of quarter centuries Chapter VI of Concordia Seminary's history is beginning. Its message promises to be interesting.

A. O. F.