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Editorial

To the Brethren of the Church:

I HAVE JUST had the pleasant and stimulating experience of visiting four of our district conventions. I always enjoy this, because I meet a great number of friends, seminary alumni, alert laymen, and a general cross section of our great Church. I use the term "great" in speaking of our Church, because we do have more vitality, more *esprit de corps* than any church body I know of. It is a thrilling sight to see hundreds of laymen giving up three or four days of their time, sacrificing their financial resources, to come to a church convention and talk about the affairs of God's Kingdom. It is equally pleasant to see our pastors and teachers giving of themselves and their talents in the support of God's work.

At all of these meetings I have had the pleasure of reporting both to the convention and to our alumni about the progress of your seminary at Springfield. I would like to share some of these things with you, because we have been having some very exciting things going on here in recent weeks.

Perhaps the most important thing that has happened on our campus in many a year is the final visit of the accreditation team of the American Association of Theological Schools. If this team gives a favorable report (and we pray God that they will) we will be eligible for full accreditation with the AATS at the time of the June meeting of this organization in St. Louis. This will constitute one of the greatest break throughs in the history of our seminary, and will bring us into the family of great theological seminaries in America. This has been a long time in coming, and it is something for which our faculty, particularly Dean Lorman Petersen, deserves tremendous credit. Accreditation will mean that our faculty will be eligible for special grants, our library will be eligible for special financial support, our students will be accepted without question into the major graduate schools throughout the world. For all of this and for many more reasons we are most anxious to receive full accreditation.

Concomitantly with this we are happy to report that 95% of our projected 1968-69 class possess the bachelor's degree from an accredited college. I am happy to report in this connection also that the enrollment projections look very promising at this time.

I am also very happy to report that the long-awaited remodeling of Van Horn Hall is beginning. This will add a great deal to our facility in the way of rooms for student activities, guest rooms, faculty offices, seminar rooms, and other facilities which are very much needed. We are also hopeful of starting on our administration building during the calendar year of 1968. Money has been appropriated for both the administration building and Van Horn out of Ebenezer funds. Thanks to all of you for your contributions.

In the area of faculty and curriculum development, we now have on our campus a professor in the field of clinical pastoral education, thus enabling every student to have personal and on-going instruction in this important area of pastoral work. We also are in the process of revamping our entire field education program, whereby students will receive a much broader education, and one which is much more closely and carefully integrated with the work of the Practical Department. We hope to have field education as a laboratory section of our courses in practical theology. We also are moving in the direction of a completely revised curriculum, whereby we hope to have all of the required courses covered by the time the student starts on vicarage, thus allowing him to be better prepared for vicarage and also allowing the fourth year to be used for a great deal more independent research, electives, seminars, and other types of work which will be more stimulating and less confining for the students. We also hope to increase our offerings in the area of church and society, inner-city, the rural ministry, the campus ministry, and other areas which are becoming increasingly important as our society becomes more specialized. We hope also that all of this work can be conducted in a situation in which the student has actual laboratory experience in inner-city work, rural work, the campus, and so forth. The State of Illinois is establishing a senior college and a graduate school in our fair city, and we believe that this will add tremendously to the program which we are able to offer our students.

We are extremely hopeful that our long awaited chapel can finally get to the drawing boards. We hope to complete the chapel drive, and have the amount of \$595,000 on hand so that construction can begin in the very near future.

Your seminary is interested in theology and the spiritual life and ministry of her students. We have been consistently developing our faculty, strengthening it in the choice of and by the addition of consecrated and competent men, working diligently to give the students a better education to prepare them to be sound, biblical, confessional Lutheran ministers in the world of change, decay, and revolution. We are more convinced than ever that not only is the Gospel the source of all of our strength, but it is our only help and only weapon. The Church faces trying times, but the Church also faces tremendous challenges and tremendous opportunities. Never have the hearts of men been so in need of the Gospel, and we are extremely hopeful here in Springfield that we can continue to turn out men year after year who understand the world into which they are going and have a firm grasp of the message which they are to proclaim. These are great days for the church and they are great days for your seminary.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for what you have done for us, and to beg of you to continue to remember us in your prayers, with your gifts and with your young men. We are here to serve you and we will appreciate any help that you can give

us in achieving a greater position of service that we may prepare men for ministry in the last third of the 20th Century.

J. A. O. Preus

George Dolak (1903-1968): A Tribute

COMPOSING a piece in memory of a departed friend always carries with it the sobering reminder that, prior to our Lord's return, all flesh is grass and that our life is indeed a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

Dr. George Dolak was a humble dedicated pastor, teacher, author, editor, scholar, husband, father and friend. Only the Lord knows precisely his many acts of Christian kindness to individuals both inside and outside of the parishes and institutions of learning privileged to have had him in their midst.

This writer cannot help but recall that some thirteen years ago in St. Louis this Christian father and brother had patiently instructed him in the study of the Slovak language without which he would have been unable to minister to many of God's people in Eastern Canada.

For more than twenty-three years, Dr. Dolak rendered a special service of love to hundreds of Slovak-speaking Lutheran families who eagerly looked forward to each new issue of the SVEDOK (Witness), a periodical of the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. Not a native-born Slovak, Dr. Dolak skillfully carried out his editorial duties and was personally responsible for instructing dozens of SELC pastors with a competence that was due in part to his deep personal study of Slavonic languages at Columbia University which awarded him one of several earned degrees.

Few men have had the rare privilege of serving as a teacher at both of our seminaries (twice at Springfield, from 1927 to 1928 and again from 1960 to 1968 and at St. Louis from 1945 to 1956) as well as at two of our synod's junior colleges (Conover, North Carolina and Fort Wayne, Indiana). During his forty-one year ministry he served as pastor of congregations in North Carolina, Ohio, Missouri, and Pennsylvania. His doctoral dissertation, *A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902-1927*, was published by Concordia Publishing House in 1955. Following his return to Springfield in 1960, he served as New Testament professor of Greek, Principles of Biblical Interpretation, Luke, Galatians, and I Peter and was at the time of his death chairman of the exegetical department.

His last chapel address on February 7, 1968, based on Matthew 8:23-27, a text which he "really enjoyed working through" (to use his own words spoken in a private conversation a few days before this service), is particularly indicative of his realism and practical Christian faith:

"The disciples of Jesus should not have been afraid during

the tempest. Even if our Lord had continued sleeping in the boat or even if He had not been with them at all, they should not have been afraid."

And then Prof. Dolak added, almost prophetically,

"And we may carry this thought one step farther, even if the disciples *had died* in the tempest, they should never have been afraid for Christ was still their Lord!"

There was a certain indescribable beauty in the simple, ordered life of George Dolak. Here was a man who delighted in reflecting over such common occurrences as the regular morning visit of the family cat which jumped on his lap to be stroked for a few moments at 8:50 a.m. in his parsonage study in Braddock, Pennsylvania. Or, again, he would chuckle with good-natured amusement at a more recent recollection of how, by careful process of elimination, he had helped our family in arriving at the Slovak name "Bunda" (furry coat) for our long-haired mongrel dog—this too characterized our departed colleague.

Dr. Dolak's students, however, will continue to remember him for far more important reasons as the following unsolicited comments indicate:

"Dr. Dolak had a very strong commitment to the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God . . . He represented an ideal for which we should strive: to place ourselves under the authority of God's Word."

"He has taught me . . . not to be satisfied with a superficial understanding of the text."

"My faith has been strengthened through this class" (Luke).
Dr. Dolak awakened within me an interest for the study of Greek . . . my attitude toward this subject has changed completely."

"He was a true pastor to his class."

"Dr. Dolak was humble enough to say 'I do not know' the few times that he didn't."

"He was never beyond considering an idea he willingly admitted he had not thought of before."

There were many other comments, spoken as well as written, regarding specific hermeneutical principles, the importance of the "analogy of faith" for Lutheran exegesis, and Dr. Dolak's patience in listening to all sides of an issue before turning again to Scripture for the possible answer. But perhaps all can be best summarized in the words of yet another student:

"Our teacher shares the joy of Simeon. And at the risk of sounding sentimental, I must share that at Prof. Dolak's funeral I felt mighty proud because he was my teacher. His death has been the most beautiful, clear, lucid, straightforward lecture of the course" (Luke).

Kenneth M. Ballas