



THE SPRINGFIELDER

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"A Prophetic Ministry"

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President (1959-1962)

IT IS A PLEASURE to respond to the invitation to contribute a few remarks for *The Springfielder* on the occasion of the Seminary's 125th anniversary.

The short period—almost three years—we spent in Springfield was most pleasant.

In 1959 considerable ecclesiastical moral pressure was applied to persuade me to leave Concordia in Austin where I had spent twenty years—my entire professional life—to accept the call to Springfield. Once I had accepted, many brethren, who later proved to be uninformed, advised me of the problems which would be mine as President of the historic institution.

I was informed that the faculty would give me considerable trouble. On the contrary, my relations with the faculty were most pleasant, both personally and professionally. Socially, I found faculty members most gracious hosts in their homes. Also, I looked forward to the camaraderie in the faculty lounge each morning following the chapel services.

I have a congenital dislike for meetings. In spite of the dislike, I found the formal faculty meetings delightful. There were frequent differences of opinion regarding seminary policy and theological problems. But the discussions never descended to the petty, the mean, or the subjective.

I hesitate to mention names for fear of omitting a colleague. But the *mutuum colloquium et consolatio fratrum* found among the Springfield brethren will always remain a treasured memory for me.

I was also advised that the Board of Control concerned itself with administrative details as well as policy and would, therefore, serve as a "hair shirt" to me in the pursuit of my administrative duties. However, I found the Board members mature individuals who followed the leadership offered.

Again, I am reluctant to name individuals, but I can mention two members of the Board who have joined the majority, Dr. Ben Seleke and Mr. Ed Kuhlman.

Ben Seleke was a member of that generation of Lutheran preachers, as was my late father, to which I like to refer as the "Great Generation." Space does not permit a detailed statement of contributions to the Church Militant made by that resourceful generation of clergymen.

Ben Seleke's speech, on Springfield *das Stiefkind der Synode*, delivered triennium after triennium before Committee One, was a classic. Regrettably, it was not taped and preserved for posterity.

Ed Kuhlman was a layman who by hard work and remarkable use of his native endowments had achieved notable success. He attempted to transfer his zeal which had been successful in the business:

world to church work, but he was constantly frustrated by the lethargy and tacit sanction of mediocrity he found in the Church Visible.

Occasionally a brother who had "zeal without knowledge" would urge my colleagues and me "to take on St. Louis." The suggestion left me cold. St. Louis was my alma mater where I spent the three happiest years of my life; most of the faculty members were either my teachers or my long-time friends; finally, when reckoned in the councils of eternity, the issues were not sufficiently grave to warrant public theological controversy.

Our joint faculty meetings and frequent ecclesiastical and social intercourse with St. Louis faculty members indicated common objectives and common means for the attainment of the objectives.

On occasions in the past, questions have been raised regarding the reasons for my leaving Springfield. In fact, my files contain letters from brethren which not only raise the questions but also furnish the answers.

Rarely does a man act as a result of a single motivation. My case was no different. Whatever my motives were, I have committed them to "Him who judgeth all things righteously."

For many years the July and August issues of *Der Lutheraner* carried appeals from the Presidents of Synod's institutions asking the pastors and congregations of the Synod to send them young men who were *fromm und begabt*. If by the grace of God the world continues to stand for another century and a quarter, I hope that Concordia Seminary in Springfield can continue to recruit faithful and gifted young men who can and will perform a prophetic ministry in an extremely difficult age.