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Editorials

"As my Father hath sent me, so send I you."

WE CAN THINK of no finer theme for a church convention in the latter half of the Twentieth Century than these words of our Lord, spoken as He poured out the Holy Ghost upon His disciples and commissioned them to preach the Gospel. Here we see the Triune God concerned with man's salvation, preparing and equipping men for the work of the Church, which is by the power of the Spirit to preach the Gospel of Christ.

The Detroit Convention promises to be different from the Cleveland Convention. Cleveland was primarily concerned with theology. Detroit will be a convention of missions. We look with anticipation for a great mission thrust which we hope will be reflected in every congregation of Synod.

However, mission is dependent upon theology. Many New Testament scholars believe that Paul wrote his great Epistle to the Romans, which is the greatest theological treatise in Scripture, as a basis for making Rome the center for a great missionary enterprise. As subsequent history demonstrated, Rome became that center and for many centuries led the universal Church in this endeavor. The Epistle to the Romans was certainly one of the motivating forces in this thrust.

Hence, although there were some things about Cleveland which made people wish we were a little less interested in theology, and although Detroit may have a different emphasis, yet theology is still the basic business of the Church and of all true mission work.

As one who has spent the past triennium attempting to guide the fortunes of a theological seminary, and also as a member of our synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations, I feel perhaps more than others the close relationship between theology and the Church's mission. Preaching and proclamation are difficult at best: they become impossible if one has nothing to say, and frightfully egotistical if one speaks only in one's own authority.

We made some headway at Cleveland, and we have made some since, in regard to the doctrine of Scripture. But the theological climate of our time calls for thorough and on-going study both of the content of the Scripture (which is our message) and of the origin, inspiration, inerrancy, and interpretation of the Scripture (which gives to our message both its authority and its relevance). Seemingly the matter of inerrancy while not completely settled is more clearly understood and less contested among us than three years ago, but now we face problems in the area of hermeneutics, the kind of literature a given passage may be, and the whole matter of the intent of the passage. Genesis 1-11 is an excellent case in point. All agree it is God's Word, that it is verbally inspired and inerrant, that it points to Christ. But there is much disagreement on the questions: did it happen in this way? Is it historical or sym-

bolical? what is the intent of the passage? is it to be understood as scientifically or only theologically inerrant? The floor committee and the CTCR in the next biennium are going to have some work in defining the relation of science and Scripture, the nature of Biblical inerrancy, the relationship of inspiration to the so-called Historical-Critical method (a subject not as yet touched by the CTCR) and the validity (if any) of the *new hermeneutic*.

Then there will be ecumenical relationships. It is obvious that a great deal of the ecumenical push in our church comes from the mission fields, where Christians are few and far between. The Convention will have to decide whether the mission of the church is best accomplished in ecumenical relationships with such groups as the LWF, the World Council of Churches, and the National Council of Churches, or if we can do the best job by remaining aloof and continuing on our traditional path. The first course involves hazards of compromise and dilution of the Gospel, perhaps our very existence as a Lutheran Church and the continuation of Lutheranism as a separate theological entity. The second often is said to result in duplication of effort and competition of churches. Ecumenical attachments will not result in the saving of money, but rather seem to be a dramatic demonstration of Parkinsonianism.

One more point must be added in summary. We will carry out our mission best if we solve our theological problems; and we will solve them best if we approach them theologically and not politically. It is our hope that Detroit will call clearly for a full and complete loyalty to Scripture and the Confessions without compromise and without evasion, a loyalty based on the Spirit-given conviction that he who stands with God is always in the majority and that our "help is in the name of the Lord." Our loyalty to God's Word is of far greater import than our ecumenical or inter-Lutheran relationships, for if we lose Scripture, we lose all. The Church can exist and prosper, as it has, in a divided state. It cannot exist without God's Word, without Gospel. We hope that Detroit will give a clearer sound on the trumpet of Biblical and Confessional Lutheranism.

J.A.O. Preus

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Is This Ministry For Me?

(Adapted from a sermon preached on the occasion of the annual visitation held on the Springfield campus for interested college and university students).

"And as he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him." Matthew 4:18-20 (RSV).

Something happened that day some 2,000 years ago along the shores of the Sea of Galilee that radically changed the lives of

several unsuspecting fishermen and then the whole course of history. It started with a few simple words from the Christ: "Follow me!"

Every Christian has received the call to discipleship. The Holy Ghost has called him by the Gospel, enlightened him with his gifts, sanctified him in the true faith, made him a member of the Holy Christian Church. Within this calling the Christian performs his daily work, whatever it is, as a dirt farmer, bricklayer, student, teacher, store manager, engineer, scientist. In fact, it is his Christian calling that sanctifies his daily work and occupation.

This is one of the great themes or emphases of the Reformation—the rediscovery or recovery of the New Testament idea of Christian vocation. It was like a fresh breeze blowing through the miasma of Medieval asceticism which held secular work to be evil, though a necessary evil. The one really good work was to take holy orders; best flee to the monastery to be sure of salvation. As a corollary of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, Luther pointed out that every work or occupation done from faith in Christ and for our neighbor's good was a good work in God's sight. This understanding had much to do with restoring secular work to its rightful place and investing it with new dignity.

But there is also a special calling from God that comes to some Christians, the calling into the holy ministry, that is, the office of the public preaching of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments. In one sense this is a career or a profession. It requires certain personal qualities, attitudes, endowments, and skills. It demands thorough preparation and devotion. This is the calling which our seminary is privileged to bring to your attention and serious consideration.

Now, by what right does the church ask those now preparing themselves for other vocations or careers to consider the ministry? Certainly not because you can't serve the Lord fully and faithfully in other work. Definitely not because you must be a minister to be a better Christian. But because the Lord has laid upon His church the responsibility to further the ministry in its midst: "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into the harvest." Incidentally, this is always a "risky" prayer to pray. For it does not mean send Theophilus Schmidt into the fields, but send *me*, if it be His will.

Our Lord Himself called His first disciples from other busy occupations: fishing, tax collecting or civil service, and other work. He did not hesitate to do this. Today He ordinarily calls men through His church into the ministry. The church, therefore, would be remiss if it did not seek men for the ministry.

Students in secular or private colleges and universities should not be denied the opportunity to consider the ministry as a life's work. It is not unusual, as you know, and as I know from some years of experience as a campus pastor at a large state university, that many students re-think their vocational aims. Some students

change their course of study several times. Why should not the ministry be given serious consideration?

It would certainly be presumptuous and absurd for a seminary to claim that it can make you a minister. God only can do that. But there are some things which, under God, we as a seminary can do especially while you are career conscious. We can remind you that the ministry is a worthy, challenging career. We can recommend for your consideration and prayer the possible option of the ministry. And if the Lord should lead you to us, we shall do all we can to assist you to fulfill the desire of your heart. However, this is first of all a matter between you and your God. It calls for some soul-searching and earnest prayer for His special guidance.

But just what is this ministry we're talking about? Rather than try to package an answer in a neat, formal definition, let me suggest that you try to catch the meaning and the spirit of it in the expressions which flow from the heart of that pastor par excellence—the Apostle Paul, the prince of the apostles:

“God was in Christ personally reconciling the world unto Himself—not counting their sins against them—and has commissioned us with the word of reconciliation.” 2 Cor. 5:19 (Phillips)—*This is the ministry.*

“You should look upon us as ministers of Christ, as trustees of the secrets of God. And it is a prime requisite in a trustee that he should prove worthy of his trust.” 1 Cor. 4:1.—*This is the ministry.*

“We dare to say such things because of the confidence we have in God through Christ, and not because we are confident of our own powers. It is God who makes us competent administrators of the New Testament, and we deal not in the letter but in the Spirit.” 2 Cor. 3:4-6.—*This is the ministry.*

“We are handicapped on all sides, but we are not frustrated; we are puzzled, but never in despair. We are persecuted, but we never have to stand it alone; we may be knocked down, but we are never knocked out! Every day we experience something of the death of the Lord Jesus, so that we may also know the power of the life of Jesus in these bodies of ours. We are always facing death, but this means that you know more of life.” 2 Cor. 4:8-10.—*This is the ministry.*

“To the weak I became a weak man, that I might win the weak. I have, in short, been all things to all sorts of men that by every possible means I might win some to God. I do all this for the sake of the Gospel; I want to play my part in it properly.” 1 Cor. 9:22,23.—*This is the ministry.*

“Preach the word of God. Never lose your sense of urgency, in season and out of season. Prove, correct, encourage, using the utmost patience in your teaching.” 2 Tim. 4:2.—*This is the ministry.*

"He gave Himself as a ransom for all—an act of Redemption which happened once, but which stands for all time as a witness to what He is. I was appointed Proclaimer and Special Messenger of this great act of His, to teach (incredible as it may sound) the Gentile world to believe and know the truth." 1 Tim. 2:5-7.—*This is the ministry.*

"The glorious fight that God gave me I have fought, the course that I was set I have finished, and I have kept the faith. The future for me holds the crown of righteousness which God, the True Judge, will give to me in that day—and not of course only to me, but to all those who have loved what they have seen of Him." 2 Tim. 4:6-8.—*This is the glorious culmination of the ministry!*

My young friend, may God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, give you his Holy Spirit—the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge, of grace and prayer, of power and strength, of sanctification and the fear of God—as you ponder prayerfully this very personal question:

"Is this ministry for me?"

E. H. Heintzen