

# THE SPRINGFIELDER

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# Editorial

## *Answer to Challenge*

WE HAVE CELEBRATED the greatest event in the history of the world, the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Having once more followed His footsteps to Jerusalem and witnessed His unspeakable suffering on our behalf, we are confronted with the reason for our existence as a seminary. In all the welter of confusion concerning the purpose of the Church and its ministry, and in all the discussion concerning the relevance of the Church and its message, and in the questioning dilemma of the very existence of the living God, we are brought face to face with the reality that God did enter our history, did take on human flesh, and reveal Himself not only as the transcended Deity that created the world and continues to rule it, but also as the God who willed to become one of us, to enter into our existence, to bear our flesh, and to suffer our infirmities, and ultimately to experience the anguish of the greatest of all punishments, the death and penalty for sin itself. A seminary exists because Christ died and rose again. There is no other reason for our being here. There is no other message than the glorious eternal truth that, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." What a challenge to proclaim that message!

The Springfield seminary which has existed so long as an institution for the education of pastors for the Church is also facing an academic challenge. For the past decade we have worked diligently to revamp the curriculum, to raise admission standards, to upgrade the faculty, and to do all in our power to become a seminary which will educate men to serve twentieth century man in his anguish and his alienation. Recently, the first in a series of visitations by officials of the American Association of Theological Schools took place on our campus. Their purpose is to look at us from every angle and help us to become not only accredited (which is in itself a very small thing) but also to become a better agent for the preparation of ministers of the eternal gospel.

The Springfield seminary has an honored past, a dynamic and exciting present, and we genuinely believe a glorious future. More and more young men are enrolling from now over 140 different colleges and universities. The faculty is reaching the point where nearly one half of the members have received an earned doctor's degree. We are endeavoring in every possible way to be the kind of institution of which our Church can both be proud and in which she can have full confidence. The addition of a Professor of Missions to our staff is a step in this direction. We also will shortly be announcing the arrival of a full time Public Relations Director who will work particularly in the area of recruitment. Several other faculty members also shall be added in the near future. As part of broadening our program a number of students and faculty members,

together with several pastors of the Church, will be embarking immediately after Easter on our second Bible Lands Seminar. The group will visit various parts of the Middle East and the Mediterranean world in an effort to regain a picture of the milieu in which our Lord walked and in which His apostles answered the challenge of carrying the good news to a world in need.

When we look at the diversity and specialization of the modern world and all the problems which the Church must reexamine, we are staggered at the enormity of the problems we face—changes in parish life, ecumenical activities, materialistic and atheistic influences, the explosion in scientific and technological knowledge which exceeds our imagination, socio-economic changes, the population boom and the continued rise of nationalism. If our attention is centered on the problems, we will completely lose our perspective. Despair and discouragement will follow. But if we view these problems as challenges and opportunities for a Church which genuinely believes in its message and in the importance of this message for all mankind, then joy and enthusiasm must follow. This is our day of great opportunity for service to the Church. We genuinely hope that we can answer this challenge.

We bespeak your prayers and your continued support, and we pledge to you that we will strive to fulfill the challenge as we dedicate ourselves to the service of the incarnate, crucified, and risen Lord, and to the ministry of His ever-living and ever-struggling Church.

Dr. J.A.O. Preus  
President

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### *No Academic Sacred Cow*

In his lead editorial, "Answer to Challenge," President Preus refers to our seminary's effort to achieve full accreditation in the American Association of Theological Schools (AATS). In this undertaking our school has received encouragement from practically all quarters. A few, however, have wondered whether this interest in accreditation might indicate an over-emphasis on "academics" or perhaps a trend toward doubtful "academic freedom." As far as AATS is concerned, its philosophy is simply that each school should be itself, its best possible self. And on the matter of academic freedom, AATS has produced a statement *par excellence*. *Christianity Today* (January 7, 1966, p. 31) refers to this excellent expression:

Some years ago the American Association of Theological Schools established guidelines for the practice of academic freedom. Their statement says that "Christian Freedom exists within the freedom of the Christian faith. Theological schools may acknowledge specific confessional adherence as laid down in the charters and constitutions of the schools with respect to their confessional loyalties both in the institutions and their individual members . . . So long as a teacher remains within

the accepted constitutional and confessional basis of his school he should be free to teach, carry on research, and to publish."

Accreditation does not imply beefing-up standards and toning down doctrine. Seeking accreditation is part of our seminary's striving to be itself, its best possible self, to the end that the Church may be well-served.

E. H. H.

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Selma, "Opportunity for Excellence"

"Opportunity for Excellence" is the motto suggested for the Alabama Lutheran Academy and College by its new president, Professor Paul G. Elbrecht, former Field Work Director at our seminary.

Under the guidance of a man who just doesn't like second place, we can expect things to happen at this field of the church's mission too long lacking in concerted support.

"Opportunity for Excellence" reflects the function the Selma Lutheran Academy and College is to fulfill in the synodically sponsored program for higher education.

Let this be the day in which we bend every effort to give our friends and fellow Christians in the South an opportunity for excellence. This is the aim of its president.

"Let this school be an opportunity for excellence," says Professor Elbrecht. This is the way he put the matter in his presidential address on March 13, 1966:

"To lash out at racism by arbitrarily closing an institution which in its own way has for years been on the cutting edge of concern is, I now have come to believe, an act of sheer frustration; or it is a curious form of self-flagellation. To close Alabama Lutheran Academy and College because its student body is Negro is to punish the Negro for a white man's atrocity.

"On the other hand, there are those who say that the church in the South, and perhaps especially Alabama Lutheran Academy and College, must move slowly, cautiously, perhaps in lock step with community leadership toward social peace and acceptance. . . . For the church to say to the Negro, 'You may be equal starting tomorrow' is to invite the Negro to look beyond the church for the answer to the tormenting agony which is deep within his soul. . . . The church, if it is to minister to the whole man, must set aside the hypocrisy of racial prejudice, and must do so with dispatch.

"I hold that ultimately the solution to the race problem, if under God there is to be one, will have its roots and grow from within the soul of America's predominantly Negro colleges. It may indeed be providential that Alabama Lutheran Academy and College is located on what has been the scene of one of the important battlefields of the race revolution.

Somewhere between the polarized opinions and the emotional extremes which were represented here in Selma a year ago there is, I am convinced, a narrow pathway of truth which will lead us toward the solution of this problem which threatens to overwhelm the entire world. Educated people living within the shadow of the cross who are willing to give of themselves fully must and can locate that pathway. Under God, such men, moving with loving dedication, will lead us out of this complex human dilemma, this monumental moral morass."

*Henry J. Eggold*

#### CORRECTION

The Autumn, 1965, issue of THE SPRINGFIELDER was incorrectly designated as Vol. XXX, No. 3. The correct listing is Vol. XXIX, No. 3.