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## Nexus, Vol. 1, No. 1

Pi Delta Chi, Valparaiso University

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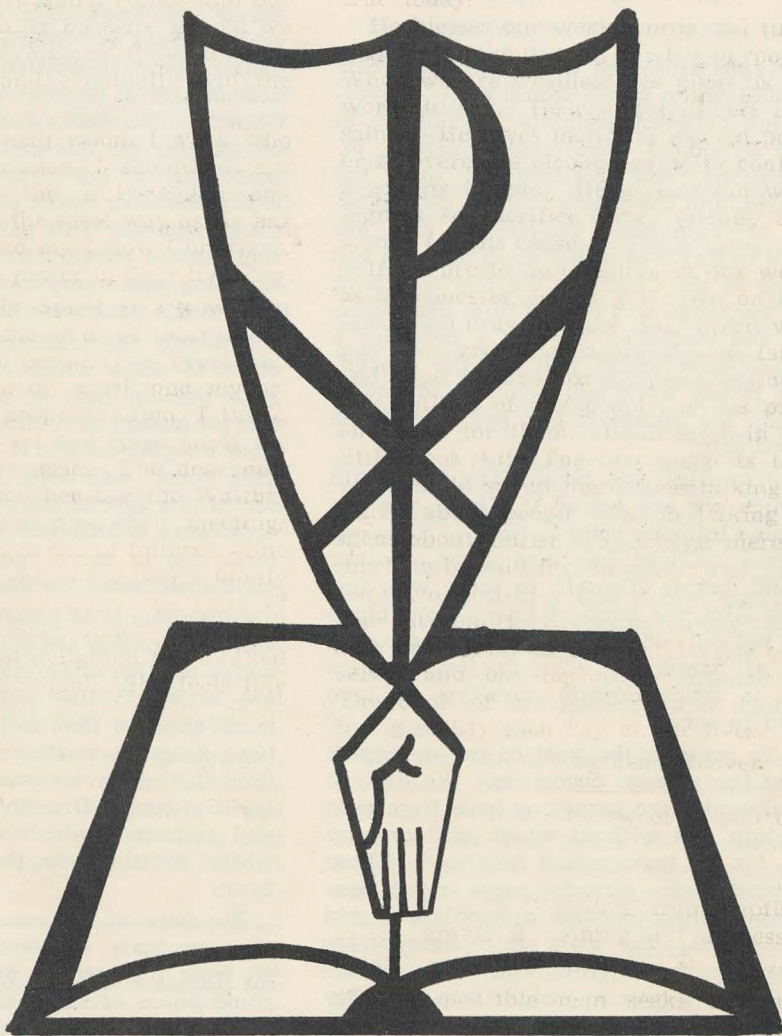


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# NEXUS



JANUARY 1961 VOL. I NO. 1



Nexus arose out of a desire to create a publication which would allow conversation between graduate deaconesses in the Synodical Conference churches, institutions, and missions all over the world, and the young student deaconesses at Valparaiso University, who are still in stages of preparation to serve full time in the Church. We feel that such an exchange will benefit both deaconesses and students. We see a need for a publication which will aid the deaconess in her work and help her to understand the diaconate and her role in the diaconate.

A "nexus" is a bond. The bond with which we are bound is Christ; we are bound into one body in Him — He is our nexus. Christ has also given another bond, beside Himself, to those who follow Him, the bond of love. Love binds us not only to our fellow Christians, but to all mankind. Christ's love enables us to reach beyond ourselves to love and to serve.

To serve is the goal of the deaconess and the student deaconess. We here at Valparaiso are garnering tools from both within and without which will prepare us for the tasks which lie ahead. Those women who already serve must constantly sharpen their old tools and add new ones. The tools which deaconesses use are varied from knowledge of the Bible to a special insight into a knotty problem. This publication will allow us to share some of our tools with each other.

Often the question is heard, "Just what is a deaconess?" We are reminded of the similar question, "What are little girls made of?" The deaconess

is "made of" many things from quiet moments of prayer to a dose of laughter to cheer a downcast soul. She is all the qualities that make up any Christian, only her qualities and energies are all aimed in a specific direction.

The direction in which the deaconess's life is aimed is service. "Given to God" is a picture of a life of service, the picture of a deaconess's life. "Given to God," our feature article, offers us the privilege to share a little of the life of one who has served the Lord well.

Another avenue to share the experiences and knowledge of one who already serves is "Sharing His Service." This column is written by one of our deaconesses at present in service in the Church. Deaconess Jean Hoover is our contributor for this issue. She wants to share with us her awareness of the role which the Holy Spirit plays in the life of the deaconess. This part of our publication will be conversation that will cover anything and everything that is important to the deaconess life and work.

Not only the deaconesses have experiences to share which enrich the life of each person, but, in addition, we feel the professors at Valparaiso have valuable insights to share. Hence, "Ponder This Point" was born, in order to make use of this special store of knowledge. In each issue a different professor will set forth one or more "points" which will yield rich fruits for life when pondered.

Other points to ponder for knowledge and information are provided by various books and resource materials. We who are active in the academic world are more exposed than is the ordinary full-time kingdom-worker to new contributions in the literary world. Consequently, "Guides for Growth" spotlights books and resources which would be worthwhile additions to the deaconess's library.

We here at Deaconess Hall also feel that graduate deaconesses might benefit from the insights of the learner into some phase of her training. The training program constantly changes, and new developments in the training may aid those who have already graduated. "Forward in Faith" will offer the student an opportunity to speak about matters which are a part of her particular way of life.

The life of the deaconess or the student is a response to the Lord's touch upon her. The life of every Christian is a response to the Lord's touch and is bound to the Life of the Lord. A special way in which the Christian joins himself to Christ, the Life-giving vine, and opens himself to God's power is worship. The thread of our worship to God runs through our whole lives until our lives become hymns of praise to Him. "The Lord our Life" is a column which is designed to aid the deaconess in her devotions and to help guide her in the quiet, worship-moments of her day. We are indebted to Professor Kenneth F. Korby of Valparaiso University for the litany found in this our first issue. Regularly on Monday nights our deaconesses all over the world and we students at Deaconess Hall unite in prayer for each other. Perhaps this litany will become our common expression of love and concern for one another.

Beside our own deaconesses we are aware that deaconesses from other Protestant Churches are busy at Christ's work in the Kingdom. We have invited the diaconates of other denominations, Lutheran and otherwise, to send us news of their work and deaconess programs. The responses have been pleasing, and the results will be seen in "Outlooks of Others" in the coming issues of *Nexus*.

Lastly, in *Nexus* we have the editor's corner, "Opinions of Ours." As the title suggests, this column will present the editorial view of *Nexus*, and will permit us to comment on subjects we feel are especially important and pertinent.

Although this publication is aimed primarily at deaconesses and deaconess students, we feel that its scope is broad enough that other church workers and lay-people will appreciate and benefit from its content.

**NEXUS**

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Deaconess Martha Theilmann has been given by God a life of service. She has served the church for thirty years as a deaconess-nurse. "I feel this was the mission God led me to do. As best I could, I gave care and comfort to many sick, helpless and dying; and in many ways gave guidance to the erring."

Her serving mission began with her training at Bethesda Lutheran Home in Watertown, Wisconsin, in 1927. She had previously visited the institution and had noted the deaconesses and the work that they did in the Home. In fulfillment of a promise she had made to serve her Lord, she entered the training school and graduated two years later.

"My first call was to Concordia Teachers College, Seward, Nebraska, to serve as nurse for the students. How could I ever take care of so many? The first patient was such a fine person that all fear left me, and working under doctor's orders, all went well." After two years she requested to be released to take care of her mother, who died a few months later.

The next call of this dedicated deaconess placed her in the Indian Mission Boarding School at Red Springs, Wisconsin. Her two years at the Indian mission as the matron for boys are among her memorable experiences. She found the Indian children suspicious of the whites and their offers to help. Though she did not know much about the Indians' lives and habits, in time she gained their confidence and learned some of their customs. Martha's work in Red Springs ended when the mission was closed.

Deaconess Theilmann continued her work as a matron, with the addition of nursing duties, at the School for the Deaf

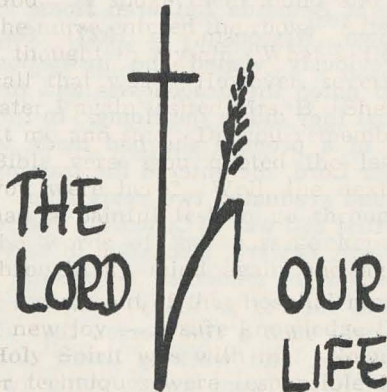
in Detroit, Michigan, where she served for nearly six years. She then returned to Bethesda to serve as matron for eleven years. "To say there was never a dull moment is putting it mildly. But, I did enjoy my work and love the children as I still do."

Her next call of duty was to the Lutheran Child Welfare Association in Indianapolis, Indiana. She remained in Indianapolis for a year. She spent the next seven year at the Lutheran Altemheim in St. Louis. "As much as I loved the work among the dear old people, the time came to retire and God led me to return to Bethesda where I am now serving."

At Bethesda she has charge of the dental clinic, assists in playing the organ in chapel, and relieves an attendant about once a week. "I am so happy I can still serve in a small way, and I hope I can continue a while longer. I

have no special plans for the future but I ask God to guide and direct me as He has in the past."

Deaconess Theilmann is well-known and loved by her sisters in service, especially for her keen sense of humor which has enlivened many deaconess conferences. For those who seek to follow her example of service which is given to God, Miss Theilmann has this to say: "There is so much satisfaction in serving and there is so much to be done. May the love of Christ who has done so much for us, and has given us such a wonderful example of service, lead many young Christian women to become interested in taking up deaconess training. Then out of love to their Savior, they will also love and serve their fellowmen, thereby helping more souls to come to salvation. Yes, there is so much to do and so few to do it."



### A Litany for Deaconesses

By Prof. Kenneth F. Korby

Lord, have mercy upon us;  
Christ, have mercy upon us;  
Lord, have mercy upon us.

**V/ O God, our dear Father in heaven:**

R/ Make us bold to trust You as beloved children.

**V/ Lord Jesus, our precious Savior and Brother, Who for joy didst become our Servant:**

R/ Lead us to joyful service of the needy.

**V/ Holy Spirit, Giver of Life to the Church:**

R/ Nourish our life on the Courage of Christ.

**V/ Holy, Blessed Trinity, Author and**

**Executor of the Mystery of our salvation:**

R/ Unite our hearts to praise Your Name.

**V/ Father, after Whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named:**

R/ Make us grateful for the companionship of other people, receiving them as gifts of Your grace;

Shape us into companions for those who have not learned to live in community;

And satisfy with Your own gracious gifts those of our sisters who work in isolated places.

**V/ Jesus, Suffering Redeemer and Praying Priest:**

R/ Assist us  
by patient bearing of injuries to spread the peace of Your Cross;  
by steadfast endurance without envy or resentment  
to demonstrate Your victory;  
by steady and faithful prayer to carry our brother into Your gracious presence.

**V/ Jesus: Friend of sinners, Companion of the outcast, Associate of the needy:**

R/ Enlighten our eyes to see You in our needy Brother.

**V/ Holy Spirit, Purifier of sinners, mak-**

**us sharers in the holiness of God:**

R/ Bestow upon us the Mind of Christ that we neither think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, nor deprecate ourselves in unbelief, calling common what You have called clean.

**V/ Holy Spirit, Fire of God, coming down from heaven, filling the Church:**

R/ Warm our hearts to love God and our neighbor with our whole beings.

**V/ Holy Spirit, Guide into all Truth:**

R/ Assist us in our teaching that we may joyfully bear the burden of the unlearned and ignorant;

Help us share our insight without putting on airs;

Cause us to learn without envy and recrimination;

Endow us with patience and skill to communicate Your Truth.

**V/ Father of pity,****Son of compassionate suffering, Spirit of consolation and courage:**

R/ Remember in mercy the sick and dying, the suffering and persecuted, the fearful and distraught, the bored and despairing,

By Your goodness relieve each according to his need and fortify them to trust You as Father.

**V/ God of Righteousness:**

R/ Convert to Yourself those who hate You;

Arouse those who have become dull towards You;

Enlighten those who have blinded their eyes to You;

Strengthen those who trust You; Guide those who seek You.

**V/ I believe that God has made me and all creatures:**

R/ Teach me, O my Maker, to look upon my person and my abilities as Your gifts,

so that I may trust Your care for me,

so that I may be delivered from jealousy and envy,

so that I may see You hidden in my neighbor and there serve

You with gladness.

To You, generous Father, I offer thanks and praise honor and glory.

**V/ I believe that Jesus Christ is my Lord:**

R/ By Your Cross, gracious Lord, crucify in me all evil desires and unbelief;

By Your unspotted righteousness, gracious Lord,

bedeck me in Your own Self that I may be delivered to God forever;

By Your service to fallen mankind, gracious Lord,

lead me to serve You among the fallen of the earth;

By Your glorious resurrection from the dead, gracious Lord,

raise me to live with You forever.

**V/ I believe in the Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of life:**

R/ Creator Spirit, raise me up anew by confidence in Your daily and rich forgiveness of my sins; Creator Spirit, bind me in the unity of love with Your saintly community;

Creator Spirit, enlighten my eyes to see the saints You have made in Your congregation;

Creator Spirit, quicken in me the lively anticipation of my resurrection from the dead.

**V/ Blessed Lord, Who has caused the Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning:**

R/ Speak to us; we are listening; Strengthen us in our need.

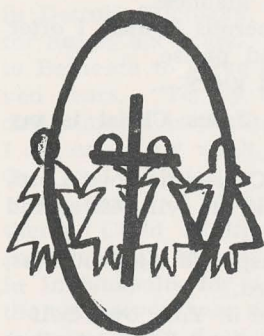
**V/ Blessed Lord, Who has taken us into the death and resurrection of Your Son in our Baptism:**

R/ Make our lives a living from and returning to that holy Font.

**V/ Blessed Lord, Who, nourishing us on the Body and Blood of Christ, creates us into a new fellowship:**

R/ Make us to be indeed the Body of Christ and the vehicle of love and joy in this world, until we offer the full and perfect praise forever.

Amen.



## SHARING HIS SERVICE

### Holy Spirit at Work

One day I made a hospital call. I had hardly entered Mrs. B's room when she said, "Oh, I'm going to be sick!" and rang for the nurse. I thought, "What will I do now?" For some reason the words of Psalm 46:10 came to my mind, "Be still and know that I am God." I spoke them aloud and left as the nurse entered the room. Afterwards I thought to myself, "What a flop of a call that was." However, several days later I again visited Mrs. B. She smiled at me and said, "Do you remember that Bible verse you quoted the last time you were here? Well, the next day I had a painful test to go through, and the words of that passage kept going through my mind again and again."

I came out of that hospital room with a new joy — a sure knowledge that the Holy Spirit was with me. No methods or techniques were responsible for this woman's comfort. It was the Holy Spirit Himself who used my weakness and confusion for a great and glorious purpose.

Too often we get so bogged down with methods, techniques, and organizations that we lose sight of the thing that is most vital and significant in our work as deaconesses, namely, that it is the Holy Spirit who is the life of our work.

Now, if the deaconess is to recognize the power of the Holy Spirit in her work, she must first experience His power in her own life. At confirmation each one of us memorized Luther's meaning of the third article, "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened

me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith." Such a confession must certainly engender a humility which recognizes that if the Holy Spirit had not called me and had not worked faith in my heart, I would not belong to God today.

The second consideration is that the Holy Spirit has not only begun faith in my heart, He has nurtured it and made it grow as well. He has helped me to develop the ability to live a more God-pleasing Christian life, and He has also given me some special gifts for the carrying out of my work as a deaconess.

I vividly remember my installation service. In his sermon, President Kleiner said, "You must love people," and as he spoke those words I shrank back in the big chair in which I was sitting in front of the congregation. A terrible fear gripped my heart. "Do I really love people or do I just want to please myself?" The thought raced through my mind, but then came the pastor's comforting words, "The Holy Spirit will give you this love." How true his words were. The Holy Spirit helps us to love that irritating teenager, that whining child, that gossipy woman, or that lazy man.

Therefore, the onus is on each one of us to avail ourselves of the means through which the Holy Spirit works. We must be faithful in reading and studying God's Holy Word — not just a chapter a day to satisfy our conscience or a few verses to give us a thought for the day, but it must be a diligent, searching study. Also, the deaconess should be a frequent guest at the Lord's Supper through which she receives the assurance of the forgiveness of her sins and a fuller measure of the Holy Spirit to help her grow in her life of sanctification.

When the deaconess sees the power of the Holy Spirit working in her own life, the natural reaction should be that she recognizes His power in the lives of others and especially those people with whom she works. There can be a danger of becoming so "puffed up" with my own importance that I forget the Holy Spirit also works in the hearts of the people of my parish or institution. The Holy Ghost has also called them by the Gospel, enlightened them, sanctified and

kept them in the true faith. They have changed hearts and are saints of God. Certainly they make mistakes. So do I. They face many and great temptations, and often they give in to these temptations. They are no different than I am. Sometimes they become eccentric, difficult, moody, or angry. I, too, sometimes fall into these ways, and perhaps they have more reason to give in to these temptations than I have. The important point to remember, however, is that both they and I have forgiveness for our shortcomings through Jesus Christ, and that the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts in ever fuller measure so that we can gradually overcome these temptations and sins and eventually win the victory.

As for those with whom I work who are not yet Christian, I should always remember that the Holy Spirit can work in them in the same way as He has worked in me and my fellow Christians. He can become a power in their lives too.

Since the Holy Spirit is a power in my life and in the lives of those about me, He is most certainly a great and mighty power in my work and my associations with people. Often, I think, church workers act and speak as if the Holy Spirit were dead. The deaconess becomes depressed because the Walther Leaguers refuse to plan their meetings and hence have a series of failures. She gets discouraged when a difficult family situation does not improve in spite of all her efforts. She cannot understand why Mr. R. is not delighted to be asked to teach Sunday School. She feels like giving up when her mission calls appear to bear no fruit.

The Lord never said His workers would have success all of the time. In fact, He warned His disciples there would be those who would not receive them. He simply said, "Go and teach" and "I am with you always." We should not be surprised and become upset when people reject the Gospel or when church members fall into sin. They are all sinful human beings even as we ourselves. As long as we are in this world we can expect these things, but that does not mean we should throw up our hands in despair and say, "Why bother?" The Holy Spirit is as powerful today as He was in the time of Peter and Paul.

The Book of Acts is an incomparable source of comfort and strength. Few, if any, of us will ever face the odds that the workers in the early church faced, and yet the Holy Spirit fairly breathes through the pages of Acts. He changed the hearts of cripples and proconsuls alike. He came into the hearts of Jews and Gentiles. He was accepted by the jailer of Philippi and learned Greeks of Athens. His power knew no bounds or limitations, no race or color, no rank or class, no king or social outcast. It was active everywhere. The same is true today.

He blesses our weak words and turns them into mighty tools for His purposes. When we are wordless, He gives us the words to say. He changes sinners into saints. He gives men and women power to overcome alcoholism or to control a gossipy tongue. He gives them willingness to sacrifice time, talents, and money for His cause.

If we are to be effective in our work as deaconesses, let us get down on our knees and pray that the Holy Spirit will give us a greater measure of love, faith, and hope. Instead of complaining about the frailties of our people, let us pray and pray for them. Bonhoeffer in his little book **Life Together** suggests that we "should spend more time talking to Christ about people than in talking to them about Christ." I believe there is much to be said for this statement. All too often we rush about as if everything depended on us. Let us get on our knees and pray for the Holy Spirit on ourselves and on the people around us. The Book of Acts will then become a living reality each day of our lives.

— by Jean Hoover

"Christ will never be sweet to you unless you first have become bitter to yourself." -- Luther

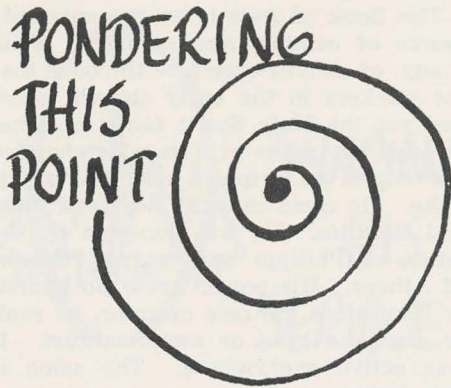
"The life of a Christian, from baptism to the grave, is nothing but a blessed dying." -- Luther

"The responsible man seeks to make his whole life a response to the question and call of God." -- Bonhoeffer

"Give me humility in which alone is rest and deliver me from pride which is the heaviest of burdens."

-- Thomas Merton





## Behold, the Handmaid Of the Lord

A trained woman, declared eligible by the Lutheran Deaconess Association, becomes a deaconess in that Association at her consecration.

St. Paul says in I Timothy 4:4,5: "For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving; for then it is consecrated by the Word of God and prayer." Specifically applied to you this means: you are part of God's gift to His Church and the world. As the Church receives from her Lord her commission to serve the world with the Gospel of reconciliation, she receives gifts from that same Lord. From time to time, according to needs, the Church, in her free response to her Lord, sets aside people and places in order to communicate the gift of His Gospel. The Church functions, therefore, in accord with the Mind of her Lord when she receives His gifts with thanksgiving and consecrates them with the Word of God and prayer.

### TO CONSECRATE IS TO MAKE HOLY . . .

On the day of your consecration, then, God's congregation, being called together, calls upon God to consecrate you. To consecrate is to make holy, to make holy because God himself uses you for Himself and His work. Your holiness is not that you are perfect in wisdom or love, in knowledge or obedience, in prayer or discipline. Your holiness (i.e. consecration) is that God uses you for His own work and purpose.

### CONSECRATED TO THE DIACONATE . . .

Consecration has a goal, a purpose. A church building is consecrated as a place for worship and prayer, for preaching and celebrating the Eucharist; books and vessels are consecrated for use in God's house. On the day of your consecration you are set aside to be a **Deaconess**.

What is a Deaconess? A Deaconess is a lady servant in the Church. You are consecrated to be a servant, a helper in the Church. This means you are set aside to be a friend of the burdened and lowly, a teacher of the ignorant, a champion of the downtrodden and outcasts, the one who remembers and prays for the forgotten, one who cares for the sick and dying. For this you are consecrated. In response you reply, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord."

Handmaid, servant, slave: this you are. It is said that the handmaid had a pierced ear-lobe; she was marked as belonging to a master. Your ear-lobes have not been pierced by your Master. Your hearts have. With His Cross, He Who is your Lord and Master, has pierced you. He is the One Who came, not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as the ransom for us. He is the One Who calls you to follow Him; that is, to give your life for the people He gives to you.

### THIS SERVICE IS FIRST TO RECEIVE CHRIST . . .

Before you can **do** something, you must **be** something. If you are consecrated to be a deaconess (i.e. servant), it is important to learn that your first service is to receive Christ. The word used in the New Testament to describe deaconess is the same word used to describe the ministry, that ministry of reconciliation of God to men through Jesus Christ. God Himself beseeches men to be reconciled to Him, and He does this through the men He calls into that ministry. Christ presents Himself to you in the ministry of the Word of reconciliation. To be a deaconess, then, consists first in receiving Christ, the Great Servant.

He is that Word of Love Who goes out from the Father, the Word full of Grace and Truth. He comes to make the dead

alive by His own Death and Resurrection. He is the Brother of us humans, Who establishes the orphans in the family of God's saints. He comes to the world of people to bear their evil on His neck, and, in so doing, to bear them back to God.

This costly Love — His life given for us on the Cross — is the very same Love which comes now to men through His ministry of reconciliation. God's Word of peace is God Himself bridging the gap between Him and sinners, making them One in Christ.

And still this Word of God goes out, looking for servants to join in its service. It wants to find handmaids: people whose ears are pierced with the sound of this Love, whose first service is to receive this Word with all its claims upon their lives as servants of this Love. It snatches them from themselves, calling them to abandon all attempts to save their own lives.

With the decisiveness of the message to Mary, this Word calls to you, first of all, to be a handmaid of the Lord — that Lord of the Cross. As a deaconess you join in her reply: "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord."

### TO BE IS FOR DOING . . .

But after you have become something, you are ready to do something. God's Word makes His handmaidens. Their service goes on to be the extension of this Word's work in them. God sculpts their lives in His way.

See how God is the God of action. He is not sleepy and lazy and frozen into static form. God moves. He moves out into the world of sinners and bears their sins in His own Body on the tree. See how Mary was taken up into His activity when she said: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to Thy Word." In her womb the Lord Jesus was formed. Indeed, by that Word the Spirit of Life and Power began to shape Him in her. Still today, that same Spirit, through the Word of Power about Jesus Christ, creates your life and body to be the carrier of the life of the Lord Jesus in you.

God does not use giant megaphones to boom this news across the face of the earth. He sends the good news of

forgiveness and salvation by putting it into the lives of people. As they go about their work, His people broadcast this Word to the world.

This is the Word which not only consecrates you, but being consecrated by it, this is the Word you carry to people. Here you join in that one work of the Church, the service of the New Testament which makes people into the new people of God. With the pastors who preach and lead the celebration, you join the whole congregation in that worship and witness, so that what the Word says may be done in their lives, too. To be the handmaid of the Lord is to have God's dominion done in you; that is, to have that redemption in Jesus Christ dominate your life. No doubt you will suffer as you carry this Word to people, as Mary suffered, as our Lord suffered. But whatever demands are made on you, whatever the cost is to you, this is your existence: to let Christ's work through Word and Sacrament rule your lives so that God may do what He wants. Therefore, rejoice in the Lord and in your soul magnify God.

### THE SHARING IS THE SERVICE . . .

God wants all people to share that life which is eternal. God Himself must do this work of sharing His life with us, for no one else is good enough or strong enough to do it. God does this work through Jesus Christ. God uses people to carry this work to people.

Consider Mary. She bore Him Who went to the Cross. In His Body He bore the sins of the world. Mary joined in God's work of Jesus taking on humanity. The whole world has become the benefactors of God's work through Jesus Christ.

Your concern, then, is to carry in your whole life that beneficial Word of God's work. God will do His work. Your service is a partnership with His Love, rescuing sinners from evil. So the Church consecrates you to be a friend of sinners, a companion of the outcast, a teacher of the ignorant, a consolation for the distressed and lonely and dying. You shall be a daughter to the aged and a mother to the young. You become the living outpost on the frontier of His attack on the world to

win the world to His salvation. As you do this work you desire that the people around you become partners with you.

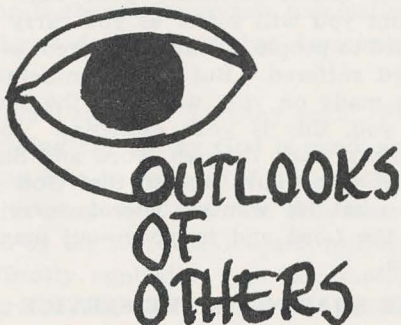
"Well," you might say, "is this different from what any other Christian does?" The answer is "No." But this you are consecrated to **do!** You will not become the pastors of the congregation nor the teachers of the day-school; you are not the fathers and mothers. But you will serve them with the Word of God, and with them you will serve the Word of God to the community.

One more thing. Many of the congregation are dull and self-satisfied. Their

lives are taken up with themselves. They need to see and feel the burning love in the hearts of others. They need to be led out of themselves into lives of service. It is to manifest this kind of life with Christ that you are consecrated. You will show some; you will arouse others; you will strengthen and admonish some. Always you are consecrated to be a servant of the Gospel of Salvation of Jesus Christ our Lord.

"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done unto me according to Thy Word."

— by Professor Kenneth F. Korby



### The Methodist Diaconate

"I am very glad to send you information about the deaconess movement in The Methodist Church. I believe that as we share such information, we shall be able to help one another very much." This was the reply from Deaconess Mary Lou Barnwell, the executive secretary of the Commission on Deaconess Work of The Methodist Church. This enthusiastic reply to our letter of inquiry expresses our hope that through exploring the outlooks of other deaconess movements we can receive new ideas, broaden our views and realize a greater fellowship in the spirit of deaconess work.

After a woman "who has been led by the Holy Spirit to devote herself to Christ-like service under the direction of the church" has met the training requirements of the Methodist diaconate, she is ready to be licensed, consecrated, and commissioned by a bishop. The office of the Methodist deaconess en-

titles a woman to serve in any of the agencies of the Methodist Church in any capacity not requiring full clergy rights. Deaconess work, therefore, takes in a wide variety of fields, such as secretarial work, parish work, social work, mercy work, teaching, administration and many others. If a deaconess wishes to assume full clergy rights through the preaching ministry, she relinquishes her deaconess status and takes up the ministerial relationship in the church.

Some seventy-three years ago the first steps were taken in The Methodist Church to establish a deaconess movement. The movement passed through many stages. There was development in several directions, with the result that three separate deaconess organizations were formed. A decisive change and step forward occurred twenty years ago in 1940 when unification brought these three separate organizations together in The Methodist Church. These three organizations are now organized into one diaconate under The Commission on Deaconess Work. Since 1940 the movement has experienced many growing pains, adjustments and disappointments, but it has moved forward with extensive programs in the areas of promotion, training, recruitment, in-service training, interpretation of the deaconess program, and methods of accomplishing goals.

The planning of the work of the Commission is done largely by three standing committees which cope with the main problems of the total movement and seek programs to provide solutions and

continued progress. These three areas are: Promotion and Recruitment; In-Service Training; and Attaining Goals.

The Commission faces the problem of recruiting young women into full-time church work. A new program was initiated several years ago to help recruitment. In order to reach the young women of college age the Commission has begun a program of campus visitations. Each visitation is conducted by a team of three to five deaconesses representing different types of work. This team visits a campus for several days during which time it endeavors to confront the students with the total mission of the church. Special emphasis is given to deaconess service as a part of this total mission. This endeavor is carried out through meetings with various organizations and clubs, presentations in chapel and classes, informal discussions, and personal interviews. The team uses the new deaconess movie, "Make All Things New," along with slides and other visual aids to help interpret the nature and spirit of the work. These visitations have proved very successful, and many colleges have expressed a desire that the teams return every two to four years. At present there are approximately twenty-five deaconess candidates in the diaconate; therefore, recruitment continues to be a serious problem, but there are encouraging signs in these visitations. The fact that many women are already in church work with no organic connection with the church is also a challenge to the Commission. These women do not receive the benefits of fellowship, training and continued growth in the diaconate. To reach the unaffiliated women an effort has been made to invite them to conferences and other deaconess meetings in order to bring them into a fellowship of workers and introduce them to the implications of the deaconess relationship.

Widespread use of leaflets, the new film and all other avenues of promotion are used to reach church leaders, parents of youth, working women, and others, to tell them about the program. Promotion has been furthered by the organization of Annual Conference Deaconess Boards in each area jurisdiction. The main function of these boards

is to inform and encourage possible deaconess candidates and to interpret and inform others of the role of deaconess movement in Methodism today.

The training of the deaconess candidates includes education leading to a college degree in any of the approved colleges and a year of probation work in the field. This training raises the problem of lack of orientation and fellowship, which is provided by a central training school. To fill this lack, orientation workshops have been organized, but these short periods still do not fully meet the need. Plans are being made for a more intensive and extensive period of orientation.

In connection with the training of the deaconess candidates, the Commission is concerned with the continued training of the deaconesses in the field. The Committee on In-Service Training is presently engaged in four new projects: (1) planning a supplementary reading course for deaconesses and candidates; (2) preparing a loose-leaf study manual for deaconesses and candidates; (3) making plans for the more extensive orientation program for candidates; (4) planning special workshops for deaconesses. This committee works with ideas for keeping deaconesses abreast of the times, informed on current issues, and alert and able in personal and professional relationships.

The diaconate, having 414 active deaconesses, is divided into Jurisdiction Deaconess Associations for the purpose of fellowship and promotion in smaller area groups. These Jurisdiction Associations regularly provide opportunity for spiritual enrichment, sharing of ideas and concerns, working together on certain research projects, and united effort to promote the deaconess movement in their area.

The Committee on Attaining Goals is responsible for suggesting and planning ways to attain the emphasis and goals that have been adopted for the present quadrennium. At the same time there is continued consideration of the goals that should be drawn up for the future quadrennium. Material is sent out to the deaconesses, the jurisdiction associations and the conference boards to give them guidance in carrying out their programs. This committee also works

with the other committees so that the goals are achieved through the programs adopted by the Commission.

The Methodist diaconate has given further opportunity for deaconesses to study and grow through a program of sabbatical leaves. Such a leave may be granted with full or part salary paid by the employing agency after six years of service by the deaconess. The sabbatical provides for a full year of leave which must include at least nine months of study or work in a special assignment — such as temporary foreign assignment. The different agencies and deaconesses are encouraged to participate in this program to provide more effective service by the individual deaconess and also the total deaconess movement.

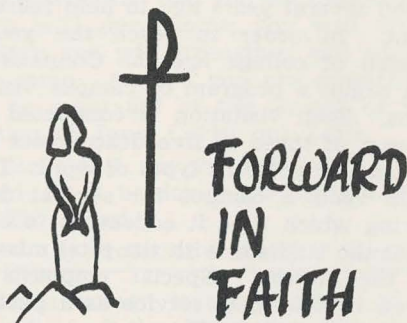
In the fellowship of the diaconate there are approximately 323 retired deaconesses. The Commission is quite concerned about the provision and recognition for these retired workers. An appropriate service of recognition has become a part of the regular programs of the individual jurisdictions. Besides pensions, at least three homes for retired deaconesses have been provided and a fourth home is in the building process. At least sixty-five deaconesses are receiving the many benefits of these homes.

The outreach of the Methodist movement has recently extended to the countries of Brazil and Southern Rhodesia where the American diaconate has helped to establish deaconess movements. There is hope that similar movements can be established in other countries.

It is perhaps surprising and certainly encouraging to see the outreach of the Methodist diaconate. This movement has been experiencing an exciting growth and development especially the last twenty years. The problems that come with change are met with a strong hope and vision, a sense of God's guidance and a commitment to His will. It is the feeling of the Commission that "our thinking must be expanded, our sights must be lifted, our feeling must be deepened, and our outreach must be broadened," and "there must be an examination of the faith we profess and a greater obedience to it." With this type of outlook the future holds

much promise for greater achievements in the work of Christ's Kingdom by the Methodist diaconate!

— by Karna Kohtz



### NTR Course at Valpo

The new series of religion courses for Valparaiso University freshmen and sophomores has been the subject of much discussion, evaluation and criticism during the three years of its experimentation. The New Testament Readings Course consists of a two-year series based on the Gospel and Epistle lessons for each Sunday during the school year. "New Testament Readings" has been instrumental in shaping and guiding each student's religious thinking as they examine God's Word and their involvement in it.

"NTR", as the course is called, concentrates on the Gospel lessons during the first year and on the Epistle lessons during the second year. For each week's pericope, the syllabus includes a central goal, which is emphasized through and accentuated by corresponding Bible texts or supplementary readings from Biblical scholars such as Luther, Bonhoeffer and Leonard Goppelt. Questions which revolve around the basic point of the week's lesson are given to guide thinking and class discussion, and an essay is assigned.

The first semester, NTR 1-Gospels, has as its theme "The forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake through faith." In accord with this theme, students examine what sin consists of, what God says about sin, and how sin is forgiven through Christ who bears and overcomes it.

NTR is not just factual study of the

lesson itself. The doctrine illustrated in the pericope, such as Jesus' sermon, "No man can serve two masters . . .," is realistically applied to each student's existence. The point is brought out in this text that worry is not part of trusting in God, but rather, is having another "master" over one's life. This reveals people as sinners who are condemned in their worrying, fretting and anxiety. Worry, which is so much a part of each man, is conclusively demonstrated to be UNBELIEF. Thus, worry is evidence to the fact that men do not fear, love and trust in God above all else.

Gospel lessons such as the raising of Jarius' daughter and the healing of the palsied man serve as a means of examining sickness and death. They are shown to be a part of man's existence. They are manifestations of God's judgment upon man the sinner. When Christ raises the dead or heals the sick, He reveals that He is the conqueror of man's sin, as well as of his sickness and death. God's wrathful judgment on sin admonished man to repent and receive God's salvation in Christ.

The second half of the first semester concentrates on God's salvation from sin. Students are enabled to recognize the ultimate Word of God spoken about and to them in Christ, and are helped to realize that this is the "Father's business" of forgiveness and justification.

NTR 2-Gospels deals with the "person and work of Jesus Christ: Who He is and What He does." Christ's work of seeking and saving sinners shows Him to be the Son of God. The Jews clashed with Jesus and His salvation through mercy instead of through the law. They expected a different kind of Messiah — not one who suffered and died. Yearning for victory, dominion and power, the Jews had their own conception of the Messiah and would not settle for a Christ who brought salvation through His death. They tempted Jesus to become Israel's political leader, but He did not turn aside from His mission to die on the cross. Extensive study concerning the expectation and attitude of the Jews and the real nature of Christ's ministry as it is revealed in the Gospels forms a basic foundation for perceptive Bible study and for the realization of

the full implications of these Gospel lessons.

The various pericopes unfold Christ's expressions of His willingness to give Himself for sinners. His existence and ministry is the affirmation of God's will to forgive sinners by sending His Son to die for them. One of the most important aspects of the NTR courses is its emphasis upon the relationship between Christ's Person and Work and each individual in all situations. In each person there exists a rebellion against the call to a life of making God's love real for others by showing the love and forgiveness of Christ. An attitude other than one of expecting reward is involved in life with, in and through Christ. The task of being a loving, forgiving servant is neither easy nor glorious.

The second semester also deals with Christ's "going to the Father," and the sending of the Comforter, and the Church of Acts' bearing of the cross as its trademark. This cross, the trademark of every Christian, identifies them as "bearers of the cross" and involves them in Christ's life of love and forgiveness. The points covered during this semester are directed at an understanding of Christ, His ministry and His cross. Throughout the examination of the Gospels, a clear conception is developed of man's existence as a sinner living in God's forgiving love and founding his life on the cross of Christ.

NTR 51-Epistles deals with the struggle of the Christian's new life. In this section, St. Paul's personal conflict in the life of faith is compared to the struggle which exists within each Christian. The struggle is between the flesh and the spirit, the old and the new Adam, faith and unbelief. Real suffering is pointed out as the painful conflict which comes from totally rebasing the individual's existence from dependence on self to dependence on Christ. This means that old pride and selfishness, hatred and impatience, must be overcome in and by the forgiveness of sins. The new life based on God's Spirit is the life of a servant, which Paul defines as trusting God's love and forgiveness and offering one's entire life to the service of others.

Epistle lessons from Philipians de-

scribe the opposition to Christ and His cross as unwillingness to bear with and love people. In these lessons the real meaning of suffering is illustrated. Suffering is a sign that God is working in and among the people. Therefore, Paul calls Christians to rejoice in the midst of suffering — to be joyful in what Christ has done and to find hope and courage in the fact that He is strengthening their faith. The NTR discussions demonstrate how suffering is intended to draw man closer to God and to train him to love and live for others.

One important part of NTR is its relevance and application to deaconess work. Many of our calls and conversations are with people who are suffering, who are growing weary of loving and serving their family and who yield to the temptation to run away from suffering and forbearing others. We must help suffering people to recognize God's purpose in their affliction, and we must lead them to see the joy, hope and confidence in the Christian's life of suffering.

The final semester, NTR 52-Epistles, concentrates on "The nature and work of the church as the Body of Christ" and on the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. Martin Marty's **Short History of Christianity** and **The Church in the World** by Richard Caemmerer were applied to the Epistle lessons to make the students more aware of the situations in which the 20th Century Church finds itself. This fourth semester continues to emphasize the struggle within each Christian, particularly when he tires of loving and tires of waiting for the final coming of Christ. The result is lovelessness and self-centeredness which is actually a rejection of the cross and its Christ!

The congregation at Corinth was an example of this lovelessness. Paul's solution for them and for all Christians, as the NTR course points out, is based on that self-giving love which is the living expression of Christ and His cross. Special emphasis is given to the Church as the Body of Christ, which overcomes the natural separateness of people. Membership in Christ's Body is made a reality in the Lord's Supper where Christians actually participate in Christ's body and blood, life, death and love.

The nature of the Church is concluded to be the communion of believers bound together by and in this Sacrament.

Through further Epistle study students begin to understand their Baptism as a real source of joy and hope for their lives, since Baptism is the assurance that one is God's own heir. NTR's perceptive study of the relationship between the fellow members of Christ's Body and of the nature of the Church and the Sacraments, brings an awareness of what God gives in Baptism and the Lord's Supper for members of the Body of Christ.

It is easily seen, especially by those who have taken these NTR courses, that the students are guided to an understanding of themselves as sinners, saints, servants, bearers of the cross and members of the Church as well as acquiring a basic understanding and knowledge of the Gospel and Epistle lessons.

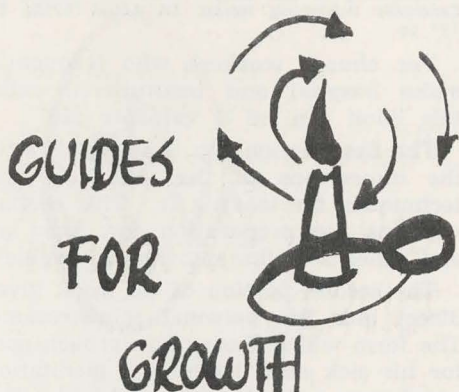
I speak for all the girls in the Deaconess Program when I say that our reaction to NTR has been enthusiastic. We rejoice in the deep spiritual experience this guided examination of God's Word has been for each of us personally. God has cut us down in our pride and sin and yet has given us the complete assurance of our salvation in Christ. Through these NTR courses, God has taught us our relationship to Christ, to our work and to others, and has shown us the meaning of His Word and Sacraments for our lives and for the lives of the people whom we will serve.

— by Helen Beckman

### Please Note

This Nexus has been published through the contributions of the student deaconesses and their parents. In order to continue with two more issues this spring semester contributions are much needed. If you would like Nexus continued, please help by sending money to:

Nexus  
% Bev Berner  
Deaconess Hall  
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**The Kingdom of God**, John Bright, Abingdon Press: New York and Nashville, 1953, (paperback), \$1.25, 274 pp.

John Bright has attempted in his book, **The Kingdom of God**, to define the scriptural concept of the Kingdom of God. He has chosen to bring out this theme of the Scriptures by a historical analysis of the Bible. In this theme of Bright is the unity between the Old and New Testaments. Bright believes that there is a unifying theme which runs throughout both sections of the Bible — the theme of salvation — “it is caught up particularly in those concepts which revolve about the idea of a people of God, called to live under His rule, and the concomitant hope of the coming kingdom of God.”

He also points out that the “Kingdom of God” is never mentioned in the Old Testament and is spoken of very little outside of the Gospels in the New Testament. Nevertheless, although the actual phrase “Kingdom of God” is not mentioned specifically throughout the Scriptures, the idea is prevalent and was the core of Jewish theology from the time of Moses. The concept of this Kingdom involves the rule of God over His people and the ultimate result of that rule to be revealed in the final glory at the end of the world. The eschatological hope of Israel was exemplified in the expectation of the Messiah.

Bright begins his history of Israel with the arrival of the Israelites in the Promised Land. The Exodus is regarded as the greatest act of God which showed the Jews that God had chosen them for a special purpose. The God of Israel was the God of history who acted for His people: they in turn had to obey His Law in order to be worthy of His

grace and to stay within the covenant relationship. Throughout history Israel was faced with many obstacles which threatened to destroy its monotheism and the whole Jewish culture.

Through the prophets the Israelites learned that the specific Kingdom of Israel was divorced from the Kingdom of God because Israel sinned and failed to uphold the covenant relationship with God. Through His severe judgments God showed Israel that they must repent of their evil and return to Him in obedience, but He also promised that He would never take His grace away from them.

As he describes the history of Israel, Bright compares it to modern times and shows that what God desired of the Israelites He still desires of Christians. “A moral world order is inconceivable and impossible save in the submission to the righteous rule of God.” He states that peace for man is the Kingdom of God, and the only way to enter the kingdom is through obedience to the divine rule of God. However, this obedience is accomplished only through suffering, because it is “precisely in suffering that the people of God are selected; in suffering are they known.”

When Isaiah brings forth the new concept of the Messiah as the Suffering Servant, the Old and the New Testaments are tied together. Israel learned that sin could only be atoned for by death, and this atonement could be made only by the Suffering Servant. This was the new covenant, and this was the covenant Israel was to follow. She was to be identified with the Servant and was to share in His mission of Prophet, Priest and King. Bright states that the New Testament church is also to carry out the functions of the Messiah in the world by sacrificing itself under the new rule of Christ.

Bright describes and discusses the work of Christ and the Church’s relation to this work. Because Christians do not regard the Law and the Gospel in the way that Jesus Christ did, the Church has failed miserably in its mission to the world. Bright states that although Christians cannot look to the Law for righteousness, they must never forget that religion lays a specific duty on man to obey the will of God. It is through



conformity to the will of God that the people of God are known to the world. Christ abrogated the Law by fulfilling it Himself. "Righteousness is therefore no longer an external conformity, but an inwardly motivated obedience which 'fulfills' the law."

— by Judy Garver

**A Diary of Private Prayer**, John Baillie, Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, 1949, \$1.50, 135 pp.

This devotional book contains prayers for each morning and evening during the month. These prayers are written for private devotions and aim at intimate soul-searching by the person who uses them in his prayer life. By noting special intercessions and prayers on the blank left-hand pages, this prayer book can be made more personal, and can be aimed toward more specific purposes and situations.

**Adventuring in the Church** is A Confirmation Guidebook by William Backus, Wayne Saffen, and Paul Malte (Editor) with illustrations by Richard R. Caemmerer, Jr., Morse Press, Inc.: Medford, Oregon, 1960, \$3.65 with teacher's manual.

Bound in a ring notebook, this manual for first year confirmation pupils presents a survey of basic Christian doctrine. Designed for use as a teaching aid, the guidebook corresponds to the six chief parts of **Luther's Small Catechism**. Included are interesting and relevant readings which stimulate and involve the pupil on his level in a down-to-earth fashion.

Bible studies and research assignments provide material for pupil preparation and class discussion.

Innovations in the manual include the use of Christian symbols which are correlated with the reading and study. Outlined pages which may be used for personal and class records are also included.

The teacher's manual is very complete, with suggestions for program schedules, visual aids, class activities, correlated catechism study, and related Bible texts. The manual also outlines goals and objectives for the teacher to guide his preparation for the individual classes. An article is also included on methods and psychology of teaching.

— by Lila Zingerline

**Ministering to the Sick**, William A. Lauterbach, Concordia Publishing House: St. Louis, 1955, \$2, 191 pp.

For church workers who frequently make hospital and institutional calls, this book can be a valuable aid.

The first section (pp. 1-50) deals with the dimensions of the sick call and techniques for making it. This section explains the preparation for, need of, and benefits of this ministry to the sick.

The second portion of the book gives direct aids for personal ministrations. The form which Pastor Lauterbach uses for his sick calls includes a meditation based upon a timely scriptural text. The call is concluded with a prayer designed to meet the need of the sick person and reflect the meaning of the meditation. Other Bible texts are included with each specific sick call from which the ministrant can prepare his own meditation for similar situations.

There are meditations for different situations from that of lingering illness to one for the parents of a still-born child. This book can be a handy aid in conducting sick calls and also can be a guide in the preparation for sick calls in specific situations which may not be anticipated in this book.

**The Cover: The shield is the shield of faith. The Chi Rho on the shield signifies faith in Christ. The hand is the hand of service. With faith in Christ we serve. The open book is the Word through which we serve.**