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NEXUS

Sarah
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november 1961 vol.2 no.1



The life of the Church is fashioned by the creating and unifying action of its Lord in Christ. The redemptive, self-giving love of Christ is carried on through His saintly people, who through His action have become His body on earth. The activity of this body of Christ, the Church, cannot be summed up in statistics or evaluated by the number and variety of agencies within it. Instead, the redeeming activity lies in the life of praise, witness and service of each of the Lord's priestly individuals. The life and work of any one Christian can never be thought of outside the total fellowship and enterprise of Christ's Church.

Throughout his epistles, St. Paul urges Christians to live out the high calling of servants of God in Christ. Particularly in Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12, Paul describes how God designed His fellowship of redeemed to enable Christians to bring to maturity their new life and calling in Christ. God, through the Church, has established the various priestly vocations to amplify the work of edification of all the members of the body, thus perfecting its outreach into the world. The Church is developed to its fullest capacity as God's redemptive vessel through this two-fold thrust of internal care and outward extension into the world. Paul asserts that through the special offices within Christ's community, total bodily growth, inward and outward, will be attained: "And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints,

for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ."

The diaconate must find its identity within the context of the body of Christ. The role of the diaconate is not always easily defined or readily recognized. Is anything actually achieved by setting up a special office and fellowship for women within the Church? What function is the diaconate fulfilling in the total ministry of the Church?

The diaconate is continually under skeptical scrutiny on all levels of the Church. Often there is failure on the part of pastors and leaders even to recognize the diaconate as one of the vehicles of the Church for carrying out its work of reconciliation. Congregations do not know how to utilize a deaconess when they get one. Student deaconesses are usually free to express their skepticism and doubts in the form of criticism. We suspect, too, that deaconesses themselves find misgivings about the diaconate lurking in their thoughts. Separation due to distance and a lack of communication seems to break down any bond of fellowship or any practical benefits of the diaconate.

We submit the opinion that all this scrutiny and skepticism has definite healthy aspects. If the diaconate is to continue to sharpen its role and to render more effectively its service in the Church, the members of the diaconate must be forced to question and evaluate. Such self-examination should be the catalyst for positive action to better articulation of the role and benefits of the office of the deaconess.

Too often, we feel, the diaconate suffers from destructive cynicism and doubts within its own members. Students are apt to be more prone to engage in unhealthy doubting than deaconesses; however, all must be alert to this danger. Never should the diaconate become so wrapped up in self-criticism that the central focal-point of service in Christ gets pushed aside. Trust and confidence can be quickly worn down to petty over-anxiety which only indicates that we have pushed God into the background. Ques-

tioning is good, but serving is better!

When we self-examine, our trust and service must be ready to go into action. The type of action called for must tighten the bond of fellowship and foster the continual growth of the workers it supplies.

In our situation, having our workers scattered throughout all areas of the world, communication is a great stumbling-block for enriching and enlightening conversation. There can be no fruitful analysis without conversation. There can be no up-building of each other to more life-giving service if there exists no effective sharing.

It is the purpose of **Nexus** to stimulate and be the tool for the ongoing conversation needed to further our understanding of the diaconate and of our individual place within it. It is also the purpose of **Nexus** to stimulate the desire to better ourselves, our insights, abilities and methods. Deaconesses need to improve on their present equipment for witnessing the Gospel of Christ to His saints and to society as a whole, and to be on the look-out for new ways to be persuaders for Christ.

The **Nexus** staff has attempted to establish a standard of excellence to provide the diaconate with a high quality of resources. The content and structure of articles must maintain a high standard of teaching and edification. With this editorial basis in mind we actively solicit your prayers, comments and contributions. We offer **Nexus** to you and ask only that it be utilized!

NEXUS

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COVER: The reader's attention is directed to the feature article, "Given to God."



"Hearken to me, you who pursue deliverance, you who seek the Lord; look to the rock from which you were hewn and to the quarry from which you were digged. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you." (Isaiah 51:1,2) Why does the prophet point the searcher to Sarah; what sign of deliverance will the pursuer see in her? Several incidents in her life indicate that she was not always an exemplary character; but it pleased God to give to her the promise that she should be Mother of Nations, and her final trust in that promise has made her name great among the women of Scripture.

At several stages of her life Sarah's action bared a gaping lack of faith. The name which she brought with her from Ur of the Chaldees, Sarai, may be translated "one who strives." This interpretation of her name well suits her character, for faith and unbelief struggled within her, especially in point of her barrenness and God's promise of a child. Her faith was strong enough to make her follow her husband to an unknown country promised to them by God, and weak enough to instigate her to force God's will into her idea of action by her own scheming. It is, then, significant that God changed her name to Sarah, "princess." When He gave her the new name He began to lead her away from the strife between belief and unbelief to a new trust in the promise to which her name pointed: the "princess" was to be a mother of nations, progenitor of kings.

The life of every Christian must parallel Sarah's in this respect: God gives a man a new name, His own holy name, when He gives His covenant to the man

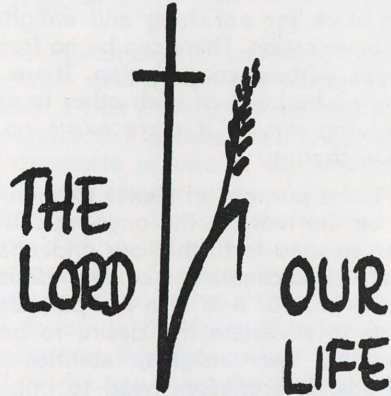
in baptism. The Christian dies out on his old name under which he has striven in the confounding chaos of evil, and takes on a new title, the name of the Prince of Peace which points to the promise of God that he who bears the sign and seal of Jesus Christ shall be a royal priest and an heir to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Sarah in faithlessness was barren; she denied Jehovah's power to make her fruitful when she attempted to work out the marvelous plan of an all-wise God by her own fretful contriving. But when she ultimately grounded her trust in God's word, the promise was fulfilled in her old body and she brought forth the son whom God had destined to be a patriarch of the house of Israel, ancestor of the Anointed One. Even so the faithless man cannot bring forth the fruit of righteousness, but only he who believes and accepts the gracious gift of a faithful God can respond with love and service to Christ and His body.

Perhaps the most cogent parallel which can be drawn between the Christian and Sarah, or specifically between the deaconess, the servant and teacher of Christians, and Sarah, is this: both are bearers of God's promise of salvation to mankind. Sarah bore the promise in a concrete, graphic way when in faith she became fruitful when her body was, humanly speaking, dead. But God made her alive and fruitful to bear life, so that through her He might extend the promise which He had given to Adam and Eve, the promise of the Seed who would restore the life-breath of God to mankind. The deaconess also is a bearer of this promise to men. By the grace of God she is made alive in Christ when she was dead in sin, and now she brings forth the blessed fruit of good work in a life dedicated to service of the body of Christ. She bears the promise to men as she enacts in her life the work which Christ's love and forgiveness has accomplished in her.

"You who pursue deliverance. . . look at the rock from which you were hewn . . . Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you." Shall we then who seek righteousness look toward the sign of Sarah, the rock from which we chil-

dren of the promise are hewn? No, for Sarah was the mother of promise, the mother of the circumcision, the mother of shadows of things to come. Rather, let us look beyond the sign to the object which the sign points out. Let us look for deliverance to the King of peoples who was descended from the "princess"; to the Prince who graciously gives us the free will to be fruitful in faith.



LORD TEACH US TO PRAY

"Pious Roman Catholics pray the entire Psalter once a week, Anglicans once a month, Lutherans almost never."

Why?

In public worship we tolerate the psalms. The synodical hymnal includes about one third of them. The Sunday introit and gradual preserve a snatch of them. In Walther League "vespers" we frequently recite one. Some of our favorite hymns are metrical retranslations of psalms, e.g., "A Mighty Fortress," Psalm 46.

But in private worship the Psalter is largely a closed book -- and perhaps in public worship, too, except that public forms take longer to change. Is the reduction of a whole psalm to one or two verses in the introit and gradual perhaps not our admitting that even in public worship the psalm is meaningless?

A common epigram calls to our attention that if you open your printed Bible right in the center you land in the Psalter. Although this point is a book-binder's accident, it can alert us to the centrality of the Psalter in another matter. The Psalter is the one book of the scrip-

tures which makes no bones about being the words of men. While other Biblical literature is God's Word to men, the Psalter constitutes men's words back to God. Whereas the other Biblical literature is intent on revealing to man how God feels about man, the Psalter expresses to God how man feels about God. The verb "feel" is purposely chosen here, for what we would call the Psalmist's psychic state and mental attitudes, his aches and pains, his pleasures and problems, his boredom and anger, his impatience and his envy -- in short, all that we normally include when we ask, "How do you feel?" -- all these are openly and unabashedly poured out in the texts of the Psalms.

But in the Psalter these feelings are not poured out to the counselor or to the dear friend. Instead they are all poured out to God. So the Psalter is a prayer-book, a collection of prayers which seems to have had only one limiting factor: Is it human? Are these prayers an expression of what men experience? Is this actually the way men "feel"? And not merely the pious man's experience is found in these prayers, but the experience of the impious, too. It is not as though the Psalm collector solicited prayers of unbelievers to get a well-rounded collection, but the pious man of God himself finds within him all the experience of the impious man, too. The very fact that the Psalmist can pour out his impiety to God is evidence of how he really feels about God, for without previous experience of God's favorable attitude toward him, the Psalmist would not dare to admit to God his unfaith and the vast variety of times and places wherein he gave vent to that unfaith.

The Psalter is also the Word of God in a way that many other Biblical books are not, at least not quite. For the Psalter becomes the Word of God in that God accepts these prayers and takes them to Himself, takes them to heart and thereby, they become God's property. But then God turns around and gives them back to us. Through His mysterious workings God saw to it that the Psalter got into the Old Testament. No one has yet discovered even shreds of important evidence to in-

dicate how this development actually happened. What "chances" (read: "grace of God") in history were responsible for the preservation of individual prayers, and the scrolls of collected prayers, and the "good memory" of some Israelite? What "synodical committee" finally decided to include this alien collection of words of men in a canon otherwise devoted exclusively to the Word of God?

Not only has God seen to it that the Psalter got into the Old Testament, but that the Old Testament got into the collected Christian scriptures (no small miracle itself), and finally that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament finally got down to us who live in these last days. St. Paul seems to have this "gracious transmission" of the Old Testament in mind when he says that "these things were written for our learning." The original prayer of a particular Psalm may have meant an infinite variety of things in the mind and mouth of the originator, and how his "inspiration" transpired is beyond our view; but God had it put down on parchment, not for the original author's sake, but for **our** sake.

God has given the Psalter back to men, not back to the original authors, but back to **us**; and he says in effect: "Here is a collection of prayers which I have accepted. You go ahead and pray them. They are acceptable prayers. They fairly well run the gamut of everything you will 'feel' -- good, bad, and impassive -- if you, too, are still human. In fact, these prayers may well reveal to you for the first time some of the things that you do indeed feel even though you are unaware of it. You may be prone to read through one of the psalms and respond that it says nothing about you at all. This can be an honest reaction, although it may actually be telling you more about yourself than about the irrelevance of the prayer. For do you really know what you ought to be praying for? Do you really know what your genuine needs are? Unless you have progressed beyond the first twelve Christians, you, too, most likely need to be taught to pray. 'Lord teach us to pray' is not only the first prayer the twelve disciples prayed, but is quite likely your first prayer, too, if you are a disciple."

We need to be taught to pray, because we are chronically prone to pray wrong. Not only do we have to be taught, but we have to be commanded to pray, for we are chronically prone not to pray at all. What Luther says about the Lord's prayer in the Large Catechism is good for the Psalter, too. "In addition to God's command (to have us pray) and his promise (to listen to us), God comes to our aid and puts into our mouths the very words we are to use, that we may know how sincerely He is interested in our needs (even our need, i.e., **lack**, of faith) and may never doubt that such prayer is pleasing to Him and shall surely be heard. So this prayer is superior to any that we may be disposed to "make up" on our own. For in them our consciences might ever be in doubt and say: I have prayed, but who knows if it pleases God, or if I have used the right form or measure. There is no more admirable prayer on earth, then, than the Lord's Prayer, because it bears the superior testimony that God loves to hear it. . . It serves to remind us of our need and teaches us earnestly to reflect upon that need, that we may not neglect to pray. WE ALL HAVE NEEDS ENOUGH, BUT THE GREAT TROUBLE IS, WE DO NOT REALIZE THEM."

Read through Luther's quotation again and substitute the Psalter for every reference to the Lord's Prayer. For us, Psalter, too, is words coming from God to be put into our mouth to be prayed back to God. Bonhoeffer has remarked that human children learn to speak by having parents teach them the very words they are to say and that God the Father works the same way with His children. By allowing the Psalter's inclusion in the canon God bears testimony that He loves to hear it. In its 150 variations, this prayerbook reminds us of our needs and of the greatest of all our needs, viz., that we do not realize them.

It must be said that the Christian does not pray the Psalter in the same way that the Old Testament believer did, for between the Christian and the Old Testament believer there now stands the person and work of Christ. Christ is not, however, the cause of our separation

from the Old Testament pray-er and His collection of prayers. Much more Christ is the connecting link that makes these prayers ours and makes us one with the Old Testament pray-er himself. The Psalter was our Lord's prayerbook (e.g., in his "Eli, Eli. . ." cry from the cross he was praying Psalm 22), and was the touchstone for the apostolic generation as they sought to unfold and understand their continuity with God's ancient people. The apostles did not establish this continuity, nor did they arbitrarily pick the Psalter as a key to it. Actually it was foisted upon them, and foisted upon them by none other than their Lord Himself. If this Lord of the apostles is also our Lord, then He has also established for us this connection with the Old Testament, and with the Psalter. And because above all else he has established for us the full and final connection with the Father, we now pray every prayer to the Father through the middle-man workings of Christ. In short, we also pray the Psalter together with Christ. As Christians, as members of His body, there is finally nothing we can do **without** Him. ("Without Me you can do nothing" may not merely mean that without Christ we are helpless, but that once we have come into Christ, there is no longer anything we can do without Him. In a sense we're "stuck" -- stuck, because **HE** won't let go.)

Perhaps this connection with Christ is the clue to praying those Psalms which "don't seem to mean anything to me." The reason they don't mean anything may be that I am merely thinking of "God and me", and forgetting that Christ is praying this Psalm along with me. I may actually be trying to do something without Him. Thus the Psalm might not actually be "about me", but about my **alter ego**, my other self, my Lord Christ.

To take the Lord Christ more consciously into my prayer life is no earth-shaking revelation. But it is the **key** to Christian prayer and to the Christian use of the Psalter.

One of the jobs for the future is to take the "superior" prayer of our Lord, the Lord's Prayer, and collate it with the prayerbook He personally used most often, the Psalter. Even a mere superficial

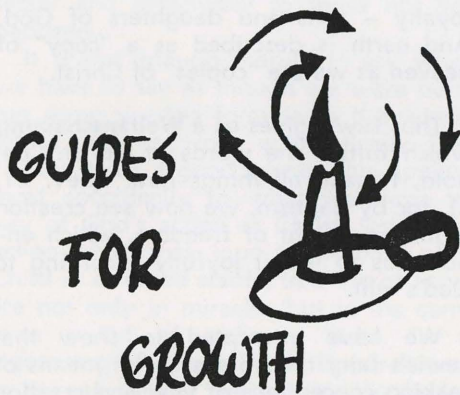
parallel placement of the Psalter alongside the Lord's Prayer reveals how frequently one or more of the seven petitions is indeed the petition of a particular Psalm. Luther's Large Catechism exposition of the Lord's Prayer with its deeper penetration into the meaning of each of the seven petitions is a tool for deeper understanding and appreciation of the petitions in the Psalter.

The high priestly prayer of our Lord (John 17) because of its close parallels to the Lord's Prayer (e.g., the first petition and "Keep them in thy name," or the seventh petition and "Keep them from the evil one") and also because of its central position to the concept "prayer in Jesus' name" is surely another key to unlock the riches of the Psalter.

The devotional use of the Psalter is still one of the great unknowns in our church. May this article encourage someone to knock off the rust from this buried treasure and at least get a glimpse of the gold.

Lord, teach us to pray!

— Professor Edward H. Schroeder



The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, Prince Caspian, The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, The Silver Chair, The Horse and His Boy, The Magician's Nephew, The Last Battle; C. S. Lewis, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1960, approx. \$2.75 each.

C. S. Lewis has written a series of delightful fairy tales which attempt to make the Gospel relevant and personal by means of a new approach. A fresh presentation of the Gospel has become increasingly necessary because we have lost much insight into the Scriptures.

The knowledge of God which we gain

through intellectual or verbal experience is abstract. As limited human beings, we must translate abstract experience into pictures of word, sound, and color to communicate with each other. All too often distortion and error result rather than clarification. Today the Christian conversation is clouded by a common image of Christ which is more that of an effeminate weakling than that of God made man, and by an ascetic view of creation which withdraws from it as evil. In our times, because these distorted ideas of Christ and creation have crept into the church, Christianity has become increasingly misunderstood.

Life has changed considerably since Biblical times and much insight has also been lost in the shift from placid pastoral life to the maze of complexities in modern urban society. In the light of the scientific age the Jewish way of life which forms the background for the words of God, has become a barrier to understanding. New translations of the Scriptures have helped us understand the text and meaning of the words but not the situation of the Gospel, which they are not meant to explain.

Lewis weaves the Gospel into a new fabric gathering threads from modern life and ideology. In a language readily understandable, he deals in concrete word pictures rather than in meaningless terms. Therefore, his stories speak readily to us, for they circumvent the problem of abstraction by acting out the Gospel. However, such an attempt demands severe scrutiny, for the least error in sketch may introduce heresy worse than the abstract it averts. Since two points most emphasized in his work are the concepts of relationships with God and of creation, these two vital concepts will be those on which Lewis's work will be judged.

The essence of any religion, including Christianity, is the nature of the god and man's relationship to him. Just as we learn to understand human beings by interaction with them, so we learn to know the Triune God by interaction with Him in word, sacraments and prayer. It is by his actions, then that the lion, Aslan, who represents Christ in the tales, must

be judged. The actions of wrath and mercy, and the relationships of sin and forgiveness are the central points which must be discussed. One incident from the books serves to illustrate the nature of Aslan: the story of Eustace, found in **The Voyage of the Dawn Treader**.

Eustace was a spoiled child. Through greed and selfishness he had been turned into a dragon. When confronted by the lion, his first impulse was to escape. Yet the lion compelled him to follow it to a pool where it commanded him to undress. Eustace desired to bathe in the pool, for his sin smarted in the form of a bracelet slipped on a boy's arm which was much too small for a dragon's leg. He attempted to shed his dragon's sin by scratching it off himself. Yet as one skin fell off, to his dismay, he found another beneath it. Finally the lion told him it must undress him. Out of desperation, Eustace lay down on his back and let the lion have its way. The claws of the lion tore through the dragon-flesh with searing pain. When the lion had finished it threw him into the water, where Eustace became a boy again. After drawing him out of the pool, the lion dressed him in new clothes and sent him back to his comrades.

The picture, as roughly sketched, is that of the event of conversion through Baptism. Sin is something which we have been all our lives (Ps. 51, 5). When the law strikes, it shows us our dragon-like existence of devouring others to fill ourselves -- our ultimate selfishness. We fear God and seek to escape from Him. Yet God mercifully compels us to follow him though we be unwilling. Then we attempt to make ourselves pleasing in His sight by divesting ourselves of our sin (Rom. 2, 14, 15). We soon learn that God alone can take off the spotted garment of our flesh, destroying our old existence of sin. God insists on this destruction, beginning in Baptism, in whose water we become that which we were created to be -- children of God -- and are dressed in the new garments of Christ's righteousness for our return to the world (Rom. 6, 4; Gal. 4, 6, 7). But

as Eustace was ever growing up in this new life, so we are continually growing up into Christ by daily death and resurrection in the renewal of our Baptism.

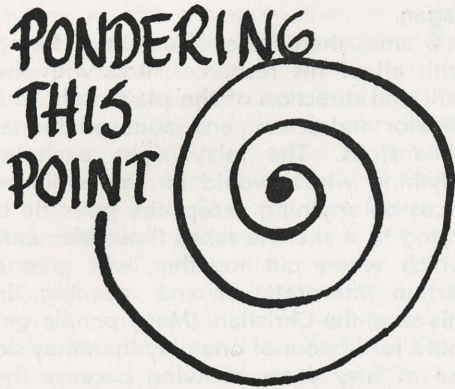
The point remaining to be discussed is that of **Weltanschauung**, our world view. The view of the world beyond the world inside us is bound to be colored with an uneasiness which we have acquired from our American Puritan heritage. We are afraid to consider creation as good because of the evil which we see in it.

Lewis, however, assumes a different attitude. As a baptized Christian and son of God, he can dare view the creation from the same perspective as He Who pronounced it good, God Himself. God created all things for man to use in fulfilling His will, and for man to enjoy as good gifts of God.

That Lewis holds this philosophy of a Christian creation is shown by the vivid kaleidoscope of scenes, lush with scintillating descriptions delighting all five senses, which he turns in these stories. Life takes on the elegance which befits royalty -- sons and daughters of God. And earth is described as a "copy" of heaven as we are "copies" of Christ.

Thus Lewis gives us a **Weltanschauung** which fulfills the words of Christ: "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21, 5), for by Baptism, we now see creation in the new light of freedom, which enables us to use it joyfully according to God's will.

We have attempted to show that Lewis's fairy tales are a useful means of making conceptions of God and creation meaningful to our generation, and that they present these Biblical doctrines faithfully. These tales also develop fresh insights, polish dusty facets of the Gospel, and are quite delightful stories in their own right. We recommend them to all who teach children, and to those who enjoy allegory, as well as to those who seek to grow in understanding. But it must be remembered that whatever else they are, they are still just fairy tales.



ANOTHER WAY TO SAY THE "NEW" THING

"There is no substitute for finding new expressions of faith. We must find a new language for a 'religionless world,'" said Dr. Richard Luecke, Lutheran Student Pastor at Princeton University. The Church begins to die when it ceases to have meaningful conversation with "the religionless world." The Church must maintain the life given it by its Lord in baptism and then it must reach out ceaselessly and effectively to those not yet baptized.

It is not enough merely to say what we have to say as though we were hurling some voodoo formula to the winds which did its work automatically like fall-out from a good bomb. This applies most specifically to what we have to say of God's action in Christ Jesus, the action which took form in the birth of a Child in a rented stable, in a life of service not only in miracles but in the common round of ordinary tasks, in a tightening of events in the Upper Room, in the pressure of Gethsemane, in the legal pantomime before several judges, in the far from pantomime crucifixion, and in a very real resurrection...and all of this for **us**.

It is not enough to hurl these facts about Christ, even at people of the Church, much less at people of "the religionless world." What the Church has to say must have relevance, a relevance which grows out of knowing the situation in which people must live out their daily lives, a relevance that grows out of concern for saying Christ so that He

has meaning.

We must make use of all methods of expressing what we have to say about Christ Jesus. We must always ask ourselves how successfully we are speaking to ourselves this message. If our communication breaks down at this point, much of our idle chatter about "converting the world for Christ" will be just that, idle chatter.

The Church must constantly be brought to see itself for what it is. If it would stop hurling epithets at the communists, the unbelievers, and the heathen who **are not** in its audiences, this self-perception can be achieved. The Church must talk to the areas of unbelief and heathenism within the lives of its own people.

It is so easy for the Church to worship itself instead of its Lord. Church festivals and anniversaries too often have about them the ring of the man who went to the front of the Temple rather than the one who hid in the shadows and muttered something about "Lord have mercy upon me, a sinner." The Church can effectively call the world to repentance when it is repentant itself. It is only in and after repentance that the Holy Spirit comes who is the Lord and Giver of life.

Before the Church can speak to the world effectively, it must make sure that the world is within eardrum range. The Church must get a conversation going which puts a man of the Church and a man of the world in touch with each other. There are groups of people now who are not within eardrum range of the Church at all or whose stirrup and anvil mechanisms the Church seldom activates. The fault is in the limitation which we have in finding and using new expressions for our faith, expressions which will get these people in on the conversation.

The world of the arts is such an untouched world, with the possible exception of the world of the organist. It will be through the arts that those whose lives are occupied by the arts will be reached. Many of them will never get within range of the Church's outreach via pulpit and radio. If distinctive Christian drama -- distinctive in its theology, distinctive in its artistic quality -- were

to be produced in a given congregation or commercial theater, that might well be the only time that these people would get within eardrum range of the Church.

Helmut Thielicke says in his book **How the World Began**, "We Christians, therefore, have not only to sing hymns: we must also pay attention to culture. God wants this too. But we cannot pay attention to culture if we are narrowminded, stupid Christian philistines. Then we hand over the theater, music, literature, and politics to the so-called children of the world, and our somewhat belated agitation and concern that they may play hob with it. . . is completely out of place. 'Is the plot of history to turn out in such a way,' asked Schleiermacher in another connection, 'that Christianity will go with barbarism, but science and art with unbelief?'"

The art form of drama is one of the art forms we Christians had better bother with more. The fact is that our Lord, the Scriptures, and the Church loudly proclaim that we "must need speak of the things which we have seen and heard." We might add -- speak with relevancy the things we have heard and seen.

Why the art form of drama? In this age of the proliferation of communication devices we have gotten so accustomed to talking to telephones, TV's, electronic brains, mazes of dials and push buttons, and their talking back to us, that we must almost apologize when we speak to the human being. Yet with all the electronic gadgetry none can match the human being in communicating best what God wants communicated.

Drama is that art form which uses as its central communicating material the human being with all of his resources. We cannot forget that God's most brilliant and clearest expression of Himself and His design for mankind was His Son -- a man, Jesus Christ in the flesh. Presumably, He knew no better way of getting the job done. Once Christ had communicated His desires to men, He sent them out "as the Father sent me out." All other approaches are only supplementary and complementary to this one -- to this person-to-person communication, Christian to Christian, Christian to

pagan.

Drama, then, takes the human being with all of his resources, and with the skill and direction of the playwright, the director and actors, and adds additional dimensions. The playwright excludes anything which would let the audience focus on anything except the point he is trying to make. He takes those elements which when put together will give a certain interpretation and meaning, in this case, the Christian. (Many people get more for life out of one play than they do out of fifty years of living because the first is interpreted and the second often is not.) And there must be interpretation of one sort or another before anyone can "see."

Through the actions and interactions of the actors we come as close to seeing life and living life as we ever do in the everyday, and sometimes more so. The actors eliminate any kind of action which would hinder the audience from seeing the point that the playwright is trying to make. When this high level of precision is achieved, there results an intense concentration of focus. When the concentration of focus is intense people pay attention.

When people pay attention long enough, they see. Their imaginations are captured, there is a real possibility that human beings are captivated. In this case, it means being captured for "the Christian enterprise."

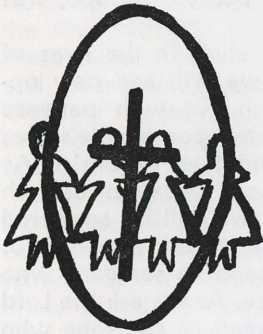
We must see again that the amazing phenomenon is not that one does **not** believe in Jesus Christ as Lord but that **anyone does**. We have this mixed up. Before anyone can say yes or no to Christ, he must come within range of Christ. Once he comes within range of Christ, he must hear clearly what Christ has to say. Each person must see that what Christ is and what He has done is relevant to him. We are raising the question whether despite the Church, the universal people-around-the-corner in our country, let alone the people across the seas, are actually hearing and seeing the Living Lord, much less believing in Him. "How shall they believe on Him of Whom they have not heard?" Perhaps one of the tasks of drama is to alert the

Church to this situation, that it is not even being heard in many places on the eardrum level.

Not all of what we have said and not all we are asking for is in the dream stage. Some 30,000 people have seen the presentation of Philip Turner's **Christ in the Concrete City** and **Cry Dawn in Dark Babylon** produced by Cross and Crown Productions, Inc., whose headquarters are in Maywood, Illinois. The Lutheran Foundation for Religious Drama with headquarters in New York has been active in chancel drama and drama workshops. Other denominations are not idle.

At the present time, however, the Church has a long way to go in taking the art form of drama seriously. The art form which communicates best to men, the best of God, is still among the least. We can only hope that prayer and action are not too far behind.

—Paul W. F. Harms



SHARING
HIS
SERVICE

TO LOSE ONESELF

The streets and houses are dark and dingy and dirty. Many of the houses should have been torn down years ago. Some of them do not look as if they can last much longer. The people seem to reflect this same mood in all that they say and do. Even their clothes are selected largely in the darker hues: black, brown, etc. Despair and gloom are bywords in the lives of these people, and they forever seem to be trying to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. They often try, but they seem almost incapable of seeing or understanding their own plight. If they do see, they have long ago stopped noticing it.

In the great metropolitan areas of the United States exists a paradoxical kind

of poverty: it is poverty amid plenty. It is going without those things that you can reach and touch. It is living within seeing and hearing distance of the glittering world of security and financial plenty. The poor are continually hounded by advertising which points out to them not what they can buy, but what they may never attain.

Hatred and discord surround them everywhere. Husbands and wives argue, and their argument erupts onto the street. Landlords and tenants take to the courts for arbitration of their differences. Relatives refuse to speak and even to look at one another. For years they have been exploited by employers, relatives, and landlords. They have become suspicious and defensive. They are unable to believe that anyone is honestly interested in them and their problems: "There must be a catch somewhere. What's he going to get out of helping me?"

These people are just as suspicious of the Church as of the rest of the world. Too often they have experienced rejection -- if they are poor and ragged, because they can not dress up enough; if they are Negro, because their skin is too dark; if they speak Spanish, because they cannot be understood by a traditionally German church.

To call "defeatist" the attitudes of such an area is almost an understatement: hope and joy must reach them.

Amid the darkness, the gloom and the sadness of such a corner of New York City stands St. Mark's Lutheran Church, a towering structure of brick and stained glass. For almost one hundred years, its clock and bells have marked the passage of time and have noted the many changes: changes in the neighborhood, in the languages, and in the color of skins of those around it. Its cross-topped tower must be the symbol of hope and joy and peace to all. But of itself it cannot be such a symbol. People will not flock to a church simply because the clock indicates that it is time for a service or because its bells are ringing out a call. The church must truly be the Church -- it must be love and hope to people -- before they will see Christ in her.

This overwhelming task lies before us

in an area where hope and love and joy seem to have moved out. Again and again I find myself driven to repeat the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi:

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.

That, where there is hatred, I may bring love;

That, where there is wrong, I may bring forgiveness;

That, where there is discord, I may bring harmony;

That, where there is error, I may bring truth;

That, where there is doubt, I may bring faith;

That, where there is despair, I may bring hope;

That, where there are shadows, I may bring Thy light;

That, where there is sadness, I may bring joy.

The church can only be the Church when each individual within her fully realizes his task of bringing hope and peace and joy into another's life.

As I walk down the street and glance back at the high tower with its gold cross, a sense of hopelessness tries to conquer my optimistic prayer - how can any dent be made in the lives of these people? Almost every day the doorbell rings to announce the arrival of some individual in need. What's the use? Isn't it just like pouring water into a bottomless pit? The answer comes quickly and surely, in more words from St. Francis' prayer:

Lord grant that I may seek not so much to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love.

There is, it seems to me, only one real answer: to lose oneself. To lose oneself in the lives and thoughts of those around you, to see through their eyes and then to show them other ways to see. We need to put away our selfish thoughts and concerns and become completely lost in those who need us. We cannot show someone how to see differently if we do not know what he is seeing now. We cannot help a mother

realize that she is really poor only when she is without Christ when we refuse to see her need for food and clothing. We cannot help a girl overcome her rebellious nature if we do not care or do not see why she is rebelling.

Patience and love are the keys to losing oneself. If we are really to understand Mrs. Jones, we will have to be patient as she repeats the same story for the twentieth time. We need patience when the man at the door does not even stop to say, "Thank you," as we hand him a sandwich and coffee.

We need love when Billy disrupts the Sunday School or when Mrs. Brown continually finds fault with her husband and children. Love will see beyond the momentary inconvenience and will see the needs and the emptiness in the lives. Love will break through and show to the Joneses, the Smiths, the Marys and the Billys that He who is Love knows and understands them, because he, too, was a man.

As we lose ourselves in the lives of those around us, we will see new opportunities to reach out with patience and love, and thereby open people's eyes to the patience and love of Christ. As we pray that the Lord will grant us such patience and love, we will be answered in full measure. As we ask the Lord for patience, he will send us someone who will try our patience. As we ask the Lord for love, he will send us someone who is hard to love. The Lord will grant us the patience and the love necessary to lose ourselves.

Each one of us needs to learn the lesson of self-forgetting, for everywhere there are people who need to see in us the patience and the love of Christ. In the inner-city, the need seems to come into focus more rapidly and more sharply. In losing ourselves, we find, too, that the rewards are large and perhaps unexpected. Again it is St. Francis who points them out:

For,

It is in giving that one receives;

It is in self-forgetting that one finds;

And, it is by dying that one is born to eternal life.

Losing is finding, forgetting is knowing, giving is receiving -- this is the strange paradox of Christian service.

—Deaconess Hertha Fischer



OUTLOOKS OF OTHERS

The deaconess in the world is a multiple personality. The Christ-like role of the deaconess is always service, but the practical applications for the female servant are varied throughout the Church. There are basically three outlooks to the diaconate: the German, the Anglican, and the Baptist-Methodist-Presbyterian types. This article is a general overview, presenting these three kinds of deaconesses, which forms a basic outline to be elaborated upon in future articles.

The idea of a Deaconess was first envisioned in the Western Church in Germany in the first part of the last century within a little village on the Rhine called Kaiserwerth. Pastor Fliednew of Kaiserwerth's small protestant congregation learned, while on a trip to England, about Elizabeth Fry, a remarkable worker among English women prisoners. He was so enthusiastic about her achievements that when he arrived home he initiated steps to form a society for improving the appalling physical conditions of German prisoners and the lack of help for the preparing of prisoners for discharge. Later he enlarged the scope of the society to help the sick and poor, and called his nurses "deaconesses."

The new movement of deaconess training spread rapidly. The original building of the society was enlarged to an institution with an orphanage, a school (where teachers were trained to care for neglected children), a home for discharged women prisoners, and an asylum. Nurses

went out to work in hospitals, to serve private families, or to visit as nurses in parishes. New training institutions sprang up all over Germany, and the idea of training deaconesses spread to other countries as well. It seemed as if many people in many places had the establishment of the deaconess in their minds at the same time. Development of a nurse-deaconess had begun.

The principles of the nurse-deaconess movement may be simply described. Young sister-deaconesses are trained and put on probation in the motherhouse institutions where most often there is a hospital for nurses' training. The young women also receive instruction in Bible study and spiritual care of the patient. The training period varies from six to eight years. Deaconesses are consecrated as members of their order, not as servants of the Church at large. They wear a uniform and are cared for in sickness and in old age by the motherhouse which also exercises strict discipline upon the sisters.

The German-type of deaconesses have certain difficulties. Almost everywhere there is controversy over compulsory wearing of a uniform. This questioning is actually a symptom of the desire of the deaconesses to serve society without being entirely separated from it. Other forms of social service are offering the same opportunities for service without the distinct separation and the rigid discipline of the motherhouse. From Norway it was reported: "It seems as if the rather stiff system of the motherhouse will have to be moderated, but the important part it has always played in creating the spirit of unity, service, and sisterhood must not be lost."

Young women are often reluctant to enter the diaconate due to the strictness of the motherhouse, the one-sided emphasis of the work on nursing, the poor pay, and labor which is so hard that only the very strong are able to carry it out, and the lack of time for relaxation and cultural enjoyment.

Changes are taking place in training to advance greater technical skills, to attract a higher standard of young women, and to prepare more deaconesses for

parish work. With this trend toward parish-centered deaconess work comes a plea within the Church for re-definition of the relationship between deaconess orders and the Church: a plea to make the deaconess more an agent of the Church in the people's eyes.

The second type of deaconess is the Anglican. Elizabeth Ferard, designated as a deaconess in 1862, felt that there was too much pastoral work in a big city parish for a clergyman to handle alone; therefore, she founded the London Deaconess Institution to train deaconesses as parish workers. The Lambeth Conference (decennial meeting of Anglican Bishops from all over the world) in 1920 recommended the revival of the diaconate, and steps were taken in 1923 and 1925 to decide upon the status and function of the deaconess.

The Anglican deaconess training program is a fine, intense theological schooling and an education in pastoral duties. Upon finishing their training these deaconesses dedicate themselves to life-long service, but, do not take a vow, and are consecrated into their ministry by the episcopal laying on of hands.

Anglican deaconesses serve as parish workers at home and overseas, working especially with women and children, or as teachers in schools. They are responsible to the Bishop of their diocese. Like the German deaconesses, they wear uniforms.

The Anglican group, again, like the German Society, has its problems. Recruitment is slow, partly because deaconesses have by virtue of their ordination no special advantages for service beyond that which they would have without it. As in Germany, a social worker does approximately the same work as a deaconess and may even have more opportunity for work. This lack of advantages is due to the fact that adequate use is not made of the highly trained deaconess because of the Anglican Church's attitude that a woman's place is only in the poor parish.

The third type of deaconess, in the Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches, is a full-time, paid worker

of recognized status and training who serves in parishes, institutions (orphanages, homes for the aged, and others), or missions. This third type seems to take its historical cue from the Anglican Church rather than from the German. As, in the Anglican group, nursing is not the required course of a deaconess, the minister or parish board rather than an order is in charge of her work, and the emphasis is on parish work.

The Presbyterian Church of England has "church sisters" that have the same capacity as deaconesses. The Swiss and Protestant Episcopal Churches' parish workers fall roughly into the third category of deaconesses.

Throughout the world there are deaconesses. In Germany there are nurse deaconesses, in England, parish workers, in America and elsewhere deaconesses who serve in various ways -- in parishes, institutions, and missions.

Throughout the history of the Church the role of a deaconess has developed from Phoebe, who first ministered to the Church as a deaconess, to the deaconesses of the Church today, who **serves in Christ** whatever her particular outlook might be.

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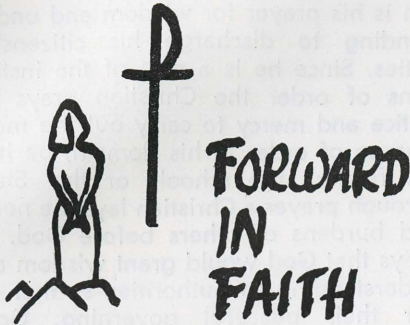
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**c/o Barbara Coddington
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Christianity still lays claim to the loyalty of men on the grounds that it can make sense of both life and death, because the coming of Jesus Christ in his life and death can make them pessimistic about life and optimistic about God; therefore, hopeful for life in God.

— Jaroslav Pelikan



EVEN CAESAR IS GOD'S

Every man on earth is a member of the kingdom of the world, God's left hand kingdom through which He curbs sin and maintains order in the world. The State, or government, is an important part of this kingdom. Today the State plays an ever increasing role in human life and activity. In light of this fact this article is written. The aim of the article is two-fold--to present a Christian's understanding of his relationship to and role in the political process and to encourage active, intelligent participation in political activity.

The primary ideal of a democratic State is that government "derives its just powers from the consent of the governed." Ultimately the citizens of a democratic State determine the policies their government pursues. Another ideal of democracy is that government is responsible to the governed and responsive to the felt needs of the individual. This second ideal can be applied conversely. People must be responsible and responsive to their government - responsible to carry out the duties of citizenship and responsive to the actions and policies of government. In order to carry out this ideal of responsibility and responsiveness citizens must be aware of the issues facing government and be able to respond to these issues with intelligence.

Citizens participate in governing themselves by expressing their opinions -- verbally, through voting, or by action. A good opinion is formed by careful thought on and analysis of all sides of an issue. One should become familiar with the events and issues currently facing national, state, and local leaders. In

addition, it is important to acquaint oneself with the opinions and analyses of these events.

After a citizen has studied and thought about the issues of the day he will want to exchange and discuss his ideas on them with others. It is important that citizen should not be afraid to let others know the result of his study and analysis. At the same time he should be willing to accept and respect the opinion of others. Through discussion one often comes to a clearer understanding of an issue and of his own position on it. It is also through discussion by citizens that the government becomes aware of their opinions.

Besides talking about their opinions, citizens must act on them. The government is more responsive to the voice of the people when their voice is backed by action. It is through the action of citizens that government gets its power to act. The most common citizen action is voting. By voting, citizens participate in the selection of officials who govern in their name. The important thing about voting is not that one votes but that he votes with intelligence. In addition to exercising his voting privilege, a citizen may act on his opinion by running for office, participating on a citizen's action committee, taking part in the activities of a political party, etc.

The State needs more citizens who will give their time and talents to politics. Christians should not refrain from political activity, for the State needs their wisdom and ability to meet the demands of the times. The Christian possesses the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to see his life in proper perspective. If he will take his calling seriously and make it a living, active part of his life, the Christian has much to offer to the governing of his State.

The Christian is a unique individual in the world. His unique quality is his new life, which has Christ as its center. Through Christ's atoning work on the cross a Christian has been set free from trying to save his own life by using the things of the world. By faith he is raised up in the forgiveness of sins to life with God; he is called a child of God. This

child of God is placed back into the world to carry out God's will in the world. He willingly subjects himself and lets himself be bound to God's domains of authority, such as the State, thereby joining in God's work of killing the old man and making alive the new image of Christ within himself. In subjecting himself to the institutions of authority the Christian also joins God's work in giving benefits to others. Citizenship involves, first of all, a man's relationship and attitudes toward those around him. By giving up his life in service to others and by subjecting himself to the domains of authority, a Christian acknowledges God's sovereignty and authority in his life and in the world.

God is the God of history. The events of history and the nations of the world are used by God to carry out His saving purpose in the world. The destiny of all nations is in His hands. It is the Lord who places men in positions of authority and invests them with authority to maintain order. The power that anyone in authority holds, be he the President or a kindergarten teacher, is a manifestation of the power of God. A Christian recognizes such authority and subjects himself to it, thereby affirming God's lordship in the world and the validity of the established authorities. At the same time the Christian citizen has a healthy skepticism of the arrogant claims of the tyrant to absolute authority, and of attempts to deify the State. As a part of the structure of authority, a Christian accepts his position as under law and exercises it with justice and mercy. In cooperation with God, by letting God work in and through him, the Christian man is able to discharge his responsibilities of maintaining authority in God's order for creation.

In prayer a Christian places himself under the will of God as he lives out his life in the world. He asks God to work through him as he carries out this will. A Christian ministers to others through prayer, both as he prays for himself and as he prays for others. He is God's vessel and vehicle for bestowing His blessings on the people of the world. An important part of the prayer life of a Christian citi-

zen is his prayer for wisdom and understanding to discharge his citizenship duties. Since he is a part of the institutions of order the Christian prays for justice and mercy to carry out the maintenance of order in his domain, be it in the family, the school, or the State. Through prayer a Christian lays the needs and burdens of others before God. He prays that God would grant wisdom and understanding to authorities so that under their peaceful governing, God's people may be guarded and directed in quietness and unity and the preaching of the Gospel may prosper. The Christian prays in the confidence that God works through men and governments in carrying out His will on earth, and that God will accomplish those things for which he prays.

Citizenship is an important responsibility, one which each citizen should take seriously. In a democracy, where government rests on the people, citizenship responsibilities are all the more important. Christian citizens need constantly to regard government and citizenship in the light of God's will for men on earth. Government is God's agent to curb sin, maintain peace, and preserve good. A Christian is a man taken out of rebellion against God and the institutions of order; he is raised up through the forgiveness of sins. Now delivered from rebellion, the Christian is placed back into the world to carry out the will of God. He wants to and he does carry out this will of God. The Christian alone has the freedom to stop using the things of the world for his own sake. He uses all things for God and the neighbor. If Christian citizens will only take their calling as Christians and their calling as citizens seriously, an exciting and challenging task awaits them!

— Maralyn Marske