

# the Seminarian



## SNAPPING UP ONE'S 'KAIROS'

### An Evaluation of the Seminar Abroad

How does the current German theological stance compare with ours? What are the weaknesses and strengths in their parish organization and church administration? Do we think that their concept of the function of the ministry, and the minister's self-image, are basic to their church problems? In the light of continuing confessional differences, is the unified administration of the church in Germany untheological, and putting the cart before the horse? Is the popular German desire for reunification of their divided territories a valid aim? Isn't the 'wall' a terrible tragedy and living symbol of communist repression? How can Germans put up with limited material comforts, and how on earth can they be so primitive as to eat their meals without a glass of ice water?

Quite seriously I want to suggest that all of these equally are the wrong questions and the wrong kinds of questions for members of a Seminar Abroad to ask about their experience either initially or ultimately. Why are they wrong, and what are the right questions? What did we learn, and how did we benefit from this experience? Our answers to these questions will depend on whether we have grasped the purpose of a Seminar Abroad, what motivation underlay our participation in the daily programs, and whether our basic stance was characterized by openness and the desire to understand new and different situations - to be taught by this ex-

perience -, or whether all we saw and heard and shared in was to be appreciated or rejected on the basis of how it measured up to our theology, and our often unexamined presuppositions about our own (American) way of life and way of church life.

The opening questions, if asked by us, make us tourists and not serious participants in a unique experience called a Seminar Abroad. All of them imply a critical-judgment bias and interest rather than a desire to understand and learn. All imply falsely that out of our own background and experience we have a valid basis on which to judge or measure the value of someone else's culture and life. The primary demand upon participants in a Seminar Abroad however is not to judge or even compare, but to endeavor to understand the culture and politics, the church life and the theology, of the society in which they are privileged to spend this short time.

What then were some of the things we learned, or what previous understandings found greater reinforcement because of our experiences?

1. The reality of the ecumenical church. To meet and live with Christians and share in the life of the church in other parts of the world is to have one's horizons lifted beyond a merely parochial or national understanding of the church of Jesus Christ. He is a reality in all places and peoples, and we know ourselves now in a new way as bound to his people who seek to serve him in other parts of his one church for the sake of the whole world.

2. The importance of history. One cannot visit Europe without meeting

history in a new way. Moreover, in true German fashion, almost every address or lecture we received, whether in the Biblical-theological field, or about some aspect of German church or society, began with a summary of the historical roots out of which any particular development had emerged. So it was brought home to us with new force that the responses and development and emphases of any period arise out of particular historical circumstances, and not only this, but we cannot understand events including ourselves and our own situation, without reference to the relevant historical antecedents.

So we have seen too, for example, that the latest and the most reputable movements and theological opinions (especially our own) should always be viewed both with openness to truth and suspicion of error, because invariably they arise in reaction to the recent past, and almost always this reaction, while enunciating a new or neglected truth, tends to lose something of equal importance in the old.

Again, it is hoped we learned a new tolerance and sensitivity to others, in the realization that because of the different history, culture, and present situation in which others live, they can legitimately and sincerely view very differently from us the same situation or problem, and with equal validity.

3. The reality of original sin. Germany has preserved the remains of its wartime concentration camps as a grim reminder of the depths of depravity of which man is capable, and for the church a reminder of the guilt which it bears for its failure in concern for the society in which God placed it as servant. That is past, and yet today East Berlin police patrol the streets with sub-machine guns and shoot their own countrymen in the back for climbing a wall. And less obvious forces, yet equally as demonic as the materialism and secularism of the American capitalist brand in West Germany. I do not mean to say that we find original sin in Germany, but rather that we should recognize it in ourselves and in our own society and way of life.

We might pause to reflect on several related and oft-repeated comments

to us, that we Americans are so much the victims of our own propaganda that we are totally incapable of understanding sympathetically others and their needs (e.g. South East Asia and Germany), and of viewing objectively and creatively the possibilities of life and value in communist-socialist society, and that because of our own propaganda by radio and TV into East Germany, for example, we are guilty of making it increasingly difficult for sincere Christians and other citizens to live and serve creatively and responsibly in the society where they are destined to remain perhaps for the rest of their lives.

4. The church 'justified and sinner.' In West Germany the church has had for many years official state support, and popular neglect. In America, the church has no official state support, but the Christian religion though little understood by many, is widely accepted as the basis and bulwark of the American way of life. In both countries therefore, yet in different ways, religion and national life are almost co-terminus. In Germany such a situation has meant a church irrelevant to man's personal life and impotent to influence the structures of society. Ineffective against the rise of a Hitler, a large part of it even joined him. With greater clarity now I see mirrored the demonic forces and possibilities in this seemingly Christian American society and a church largely unaware of them and impotent and irrelevant with regard to them (though by no means entirely so). I see within it those who already take sides with Satan, whether for example it be against the Negro, or whether it be in uncritical support of the seductive views of political candidates whose nominating and policy speeches have been filled with Biblical quotations and invokings of the Divine Name, and whose policies at the same time are directed at the deeply self-interested motives of men. Reflection on this situation suggests that in order to express a true concern for society our churches and those in Germany must soon and at some cost break free of their captivity to the society they would seek to serve.

At the same time, however, as we see

ourselves under judgement we must know ourselves under grace, as here and there in Germany, both East and West, and in our own society, we see how the Lord uses his people in creative and redemptive ways in society according to their response of obedience.

Yet, because our experience allowed us the rare opportunity to observe in close connection a church fighting for its life (previously under Hitler and now in East Germany), and a church basking in the luxury and friendly tolerance or indifference of an affluent society (like our own), we can say with certainty that only where there is costly obedience on either side of the 'wall' (and perhaps the best examples are on the other side) do we see the church a fit and creative instrument in the hands of its Lord.

A well known poet has said of his homeland "He who only England knows, knows not England." [So it seems to me that the Seminar Abroad is of vital significance in the preparation of men for the church's ministry.] It is significant for Seniors, and perhaps it might mean even more were it to take place after three years in the parish. [But its value is for those who have learned not to judge, but to see and listen and reflect, and who, as their horizons are widened beyond the narrow limits of one land and culture, stand eager and ready to be taught by the insights and experiences of God's other children, and know with joy that we and they are part of his whole church in all the world.]

John Gunson

#### THE SEMINAR ABROAD - RANDOM IMPRESSIONS

The 1964 Seminar Abroad was far better than I had anticipated. That is a statement that needs more than 500 words of explanation. However, until my allotment of 500 words runs out, I can attempt to relate at least a few random impressions of explanation.

Simply being exposed to the German and Swiss culture was in itself of great value. One may read all he can about, let us say, the sound of German organs; but until he hears with his own ears the full-throated body combined with the

amazing brilliance and clarity of a German organ, he does not know what the sound is. We have now heard that sound and will not likely forget it.

But we heard other sounds also. The silence of the Berlin wall fairly roared at us and called to mind a whole complex of past and present problems which were visible from time to time and place to place. Present ideological problems between East and West were obvious as one crossed the wall from a bustling West German economy to a rather desolate and oppressive Eastern zone, or as one compared propaganda between East and West. Past problems which directly influence Germany and the whole present-day world came to mind as one saw the ravages of war symbolized by any one of a number of bombed out buildings. The past also was very much present when we saw a Nazi concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen or as we heard various voices trying to deal with the memory of Hitler. The Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary near Darmstadt represents the one extreme of repentance for the Third Reich atrocities; those segments of the populace who want to forget and dismiss completely what has happened represent the other extreme.

We also got to know at least a bit about German and Swiss church life. Visits to places of historic interest (like the Church of the Holy Ghost in Heidelberg or Saint Pierre in Geneva) gave us a little inkling into the past and how the present got to be what it is. Lectures about contemporary church life as well as our worshipping with congregations in Berlin, Heidelberg, Zurich, etc., gave us some insight into a part of the European church of today. More contact with the local parish would have been desirable; but as far as hearing those voices which are trying specifically to deal with the principalities and powers of twentieth century man in concerned, we were given a grand tour by lecture and visits--from Kirchentag to the Academies to Gossner Haus.

The lectures--the real point of the Seminar--were of high calibre. Topics varied from contemporary developments in the life of the German church to

Old Testament to New Testament (two lecturers of differing positions) to the theology of Martin Luther to Bonhoeffer's ecclesiology, etc. The only voice that really seemed to be missing was that of the Roman Catholic Church. Some of the lecturers made a too artificial and unfair distinction between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, and some balance at this point would have been helpful. As far as our questions and discussions were concerned, with the exception of Professor Marxsen's dodging, we received straightforward and frank answers.

Perhaps the most valuable part of the trip was the discussions with the German students after the lectures. It was very helpful for us to see their reactions to lectures and to see how they were thinking as products of German society. In spite of some language barriers, we hammered out quite heatedly and openly all sorts of theological questions and concerns. This contact gave us a unique insight into German life, because we found that influences from German life had helped to mold the theological positions of the students. This then forced us to try to see how our own positions were culturally-conditioned. Surely, as a result, we all experienced a broadening of some sort.

P.S. This article is rather tongue-tied in its expression and hardly does justice to the past month's experience. Perhaps it has to be that way, since the only way to understand what the article seeks to say is to have experienced the trip that produced it.

Paul H. Westermeyer

**STRUCTURES OF THE GERMAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH** (based primarily upon a lecture given by Dr. Schlingensiepen, August 28, 1964)

To describe the Evangelical Church in Germany today is to describe almost entirely the Protestant church in Germany. Since 1933 there has been on a large scale a united church among Protestant Christians. We see that there are today a minimal number of "free churches" but according to widely accepted figures the "land of the Reformation" has 98% of its

people either Roman Catholic or Protestant and the remaining 2% either one of these free church groups, an Orthodox confessional church, Jews, or agnostics and atheists. This is a glimpse of the overall church ties of the people in Germany.

If one is to understand the German Evangelical Church, however, he must see the very close relationship of church and state since the Reformation. Unlike America where religious liberty has been established with the founding of the government, the medieval concept of church and state as one has prevailed in many respects in Germany. Historically, whatever the prince of the area was, so were all the people of that area due to a law cujus regio, eius religio. Thus, when a prince was convinced that another religious affiliation was better or if he were superceded by another prince, the church people of that area under his jurisdiction would undoubtedly be changed. To show how serious this problem could become, the church of the Palatinate was changed twenty-two times because the prince exercised his right to decide the confession of the people.

To further complicate matters, since there was a great difficulty of pastors in getting their salaries, princes were made emergency bishops in regard to financial matters. Yet this created many more problems than it solved for while ecclesiastical rights were to remain in the hands of the church, the state was able to control the finances and was often called upon or took the liberty to settle disputes and address themselves to many problems within the churches. Therefore, it is understandable that the church became dissatisfied with the close ties of church and state. It wanted a church which could handle these affairs on its own. The best way to do this is to have a united church.

Finally in 1817 for the three-hundredth anniversary of Luther's Ninety-five Theses the Prussian Union was hailed as the uniting of the Calvinistic and Lutheran branches into one united Evangelical Church. However, there were many who strongly opposed this union and soon there were again two basic groups: the strongly Lutheran and the united groups.

It was not until 1933 that the time seemed right again, both politically and economically, to attempt a formation of a united church. During this turbulent period of nationalistic interests the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD) or the Evangelical Church in Germany was formed.

The EKD is then a federation of the VELKD (the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany) and the EKU (the Evangelical Church of the Union) plus another group of churches which is not tied to either group and may be either united or Lutheran (see chart below).

The EKD, consisting of twenty-eight member churches called "Landeskirchen," meets every two years as a whole and every month in special Brotherly Council meetings. It carries out its policies basically through the action of the VELKS and EKU who are the power blocks. These are considered to be excellent checks, one against the other, for when something is recommended one is convinced and then this one convinces the other. The head office is in Hannover and the foreign office is in Frankfurt. It is from Frankfurt that the Evangelical Church in Germany sends its pastors abroad to many foreign countries, among them being Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Sweden, Scotland, France, South Africa, Australia, India and Italy. The EKD learned that the Brotherly Council was the best procedure to carry out immediate matters.

The two consisting power blocks of the EKD also have their separate synod meetings but while the EKU has its Brotherly Council the VELKD has the Bishops Conference to carry out its immediate concerns. The head office of the VELKD is in Hannover while the head office of the EKU is in Berlin.

Consequently, the EKD is united on a practical basis rather than a confessional basis. We can see that there is a close alliance and good relationship between the Reformed or Calvinistic groups and the strongly Lutheran groups, but that neither has to give up what each feels is vital to its being. There has been cooperation between them for many years, first in opposition to the Roman Catholics but in recent years

quite often with them as nationalistic ties were made stronger. While mixed marriages create as many problems in good relations of the Roman Catholics and Protestants as they do in the States, a concrete example of good relations is that a Roman Catholic can see no reason why he should not participate in an Evangelical Church service.

Realizing that this is only a cursory view of the structure of the Evangelical Church of Germany the following diagram will be of help.

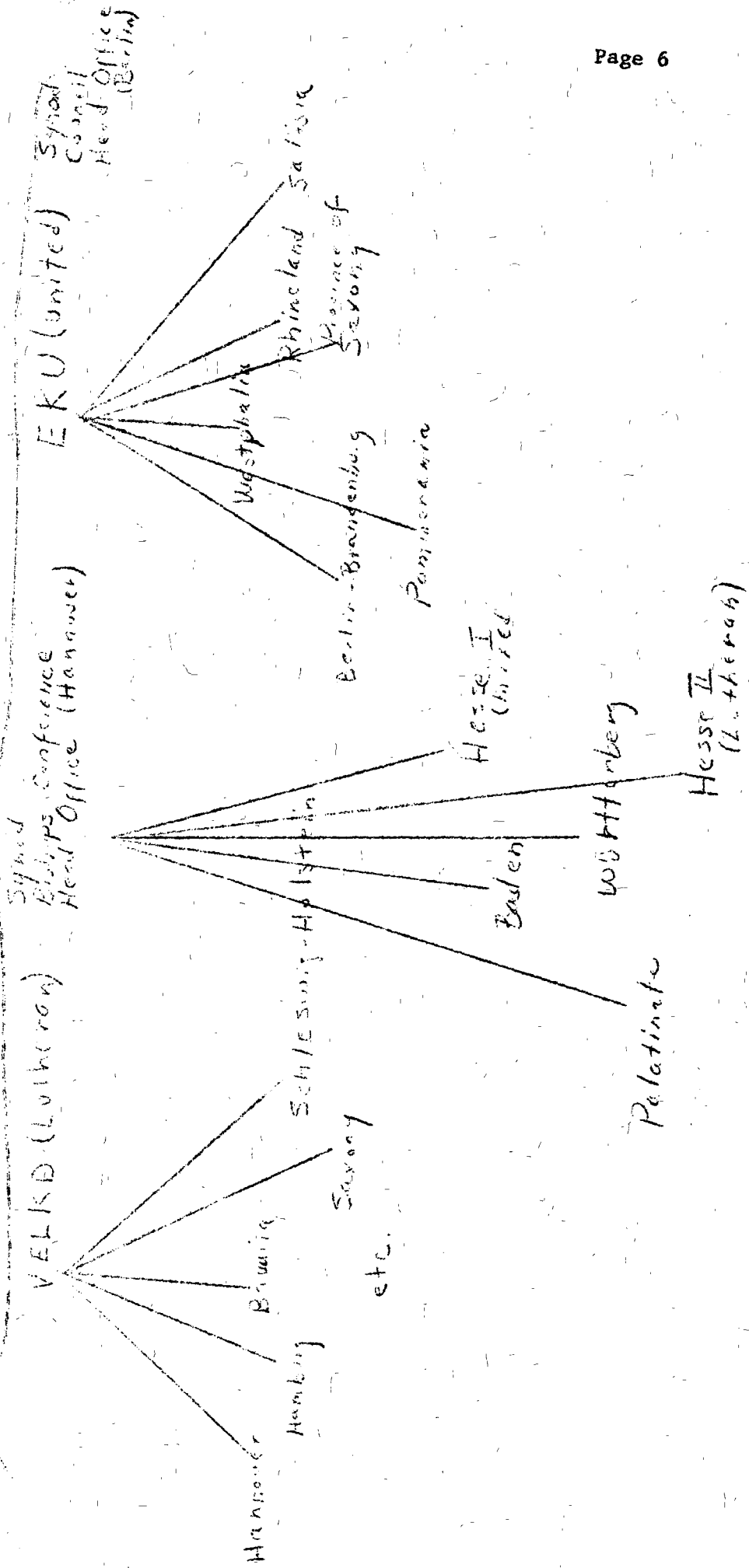
Janet Ray

EKD

Evangelical Church,  
in Germany

Synod (every 2 years)  
Council (every month)  
Head office (Hannover)  
Foreign office (Frankfurt)

28 member churches "Landeskirchen"



## EVALUATION OF SEMINAR ABROAD

A month ago we left the United States for a study visit to Germany. The journey from Lancaster by bus and then the flight from Kennedy Airport to Frankfurt and Berlin was good and a most exciting one. It was, for some of us, the first flight, as well as the first visit to Europe. Having had several flights before, I can say without any hesitation at all that our air travel has been a most excellent one. This could be said too in regard to our several trips by bus in Germany and Switzerland. I think everyone in our group can sincerely say that the traveling arrangements were very satisfactory.

In the afternoon, August 27, we began our program immediately after leaving the Berlin Airport. The first thing we did after unpacking our bags at the place which was to be our lodgings for four days, was to take a bus trip to the famous wall which divides the city of Berlin. It was a very exciting and breath-taking kind of experience because of the stories that we had heard before about this wall which divides the city of Berlin as well as its people. It was the first time in my life I have ever felt grieved, extremely grieved at the events of the cold war which we are all experiencing in the divided world of today between East and West.

Here we saw and witnessed the misery of Berliners. People who are deprived of their freedom and joy. Just in the way of illustration, we saw for instance a woman waving a handkerchief from a window in a house on the East side of the wall, perhaps to relatives who live just a few yards from the wall on the western side, and whom she may not have met for months. Secondly, we saw flowers laid at several places as we walked along the western side of the wall. We were told that they were there because someone was shot trying to escape from the East, to the western side of the city. Thirdly, the presence of armed soldiers on both sides of the wall became a constant reminder to us as it is to the Berliners, of the consequences of this wall. Fourthly and finally, the presence of Russian, United States,

French and British soldiers here in Berlin reminded all of us that the problem of Berlin is not for the Germans alone, it is a problem of the whole world. The misery presented here is a symbol for all of us. It is misery which man has created for himself and its solution can only be found by people who are ready to listen to each other in a friendly way. For the people to do this, something must happen in their life to make them change from hate to love, from executing injustice to doing justice to their fellow men. And it is precisely in this way that the voice of the church must be heard. The Berlin problem is a problem of the whole church and not simply of the churches in Germany. The task of the church in this situation must be one of prophetic nature in such a way that in the long run the people of Germany and the rest of the world where similar things are happening may in the end enjoy the kind of happiness which God wills for all of us. It is a task and a mission to confront the world with Christ who demands mercy and justice for all, because he died for them. It is also a mission for the church to cry in the wilderness of this world inviting the people to accept a change and prepare a way for a new kind of understanding between nations and peoples of different background without which there can be no peace in the world.

Our visit to Berlin did not end in the western sector of the city. In the last two days of our stay in Berlin, we crossed the wall to East Berlin. Christian people from Evangelical churches took us into their homes as their guests. Here everyone of us experienced what it means to belong to the body of Christ--the church. The atmosphere which existed during our conversation was a very friendly one. They mentioned to us their joy because of our visit with them. This they took to be an indication of concern for them and for their church during this time of trial in their land. They did not hide from us their problems, in fact they answered the questions we put to them quite freely. They asked that we pray for them that they may stand firm in faith in Christ.

Monday, September 2, we flew from Berlin to Hannover. At Hannover, we took

a bus ride to Celle. On our way there we stopped at the Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp where we saw the memorial of millions of Jewish people who were annihilated by Nazis in gas chambers. Here we saw what dangerous man can be to his fellow human beings because of his selfish desires and pride. We left for Bielefeld after spending a day in Celle. At Bielefeld we visited the Institution for Epileptic people and we saw a large program of work which the church is trying to do for these handicapped people.

Four German students who became part of our group until we left Heidelberg joined us. Our time with these four German students meant a lot to us. We learned many things from them. Above all they served not only as guides in the various places we traveled, but as our resource people in regard to church and civic life in Germany. They contributed a lot too in our Seminar in Heidelberg.

The Seminar in Heidelberg was excellent in many ways. I think that it is very right to say that we profited a lot in the lectures and discussions. In one way we learned about the church in Germany, about the spiritual and intellectual life of the people of Germany as well as their political situation. We also learned some methods which the German Church is using to try to bring into the Church the various groups of people in their society. We visited one Academy and one institution for young people coming from poor home backgrounds.

So far I would mention that what we learned in Germany will remain in our life forever and that some of the insights of churches in Germany that we have observed on this tour will help us in the church for many years to come.

Finally I must say that we all came to know Germany as one of the most beautiful countries in the world. Industries are not confined to the cities alone. We saw factories everywhere as we travelled by bus and boat. Germany enjoys too the pride of having the largest, beautiful and oldest Cathedrals and churches as well as the newest kind of modern church buildings.

Our study tour has been so educational and important. It is important

because we have learned what is required of us as servants of Christ in the church, and the urgency of witnessing Christ in the contemporary world.

Michael Kagume

#### THE CHURCH IN EAST BERLIN

On Saturday morning at 9:00 A.M., August 29 of this year, I passed from West Berlin through the "Wall" at checkpoint Charlie into the Eastern sector. This was the first time I had ever been in a country under communist domination. Immediately all that which I had read and heard about life in East Berlin and in other communist held territories came rushing into my mind. However, in the ensuing two day which I spent in East Berlin and since that time many of the illusions which I had formed, or which had been formed for me, were altered--altered to the point that I believe now they are less prejudiced and more accurate. Those illusions with which I shall concern myself in this article center around the church in East Berlin.

I have borrowed as the theme of my particular contribution, to what must be the most prodigious issue of the "Seminarian" in its history, the title of Robert Spikes book of the same name--In But Not of the World.

As I have stated, I went into East Berlin with several firmly established and clearly defined conclusions concerning the life of the church THERE. In many areas I expected to learn that the church was not tolerated at all. In those instances where the church was permitted to exist (as I knew it was in East Berlin) I expected it to be severely curtailed. I had also assumed without question that where the church did exist it would have and should have made a complete rejection of the communist regime. This I had learned was the attitude strongly expressed by Bishop Dibelius (formerly President of the Evangelical Church in Germany and Bishop of Berlin-Brandenburg Landeskirche) and with which I thoroughly and heartily agreed. However, I have come to learn that this is not the whole story of the church in East Berlin.

The position that the church in East



Berlin should make a total rejection of the present communist regime is, as I have come to see and believe, not only impracticable but also a denial of the true ministry of the church of Jesus Christ. A rejection of the communist regime by the church implies a withdrawal of Christians from society. While it was hoped by all that the present situation of Berlin (the Wall separating East from West) was merely a temporary situation such a plan of withdrawal and rejection was feasible. However, now that the "Wall" has taken on more of a "permanent appearance" withdrawal from the communist society becomes for Christians not a temporary reaction, but a lifetime affair. Christians are compelled to live within the East Zone. Thus this plan of withdrawal and rejection becomes an impossible and impracticable position. What then is the answer for Christians in the East Zone? Other than the position of withdrawal and rejection, some few Christians in the pretense and hope to preserve the Christian Church (which they evidently feel is doomed to extinction within communist East Berlin) have begun to work in conjunction with communism. This, of course, obviously involves the sacrifice of Christian principles. What in fact they are doing is making certain the very extinction of the church which they hope to avoid.

The development within the church of East Berlin wherein I believe lies the most plausible and practicable solution is that position I see as standing within the true church as explained to us by Konsistorealrat F. Schillingensiepen (the man responsible for Ecumenical relations in the Evangelical Church of Germany). This position states that as Christians they hold directly opposite views toward life than do communists. Nevertheless, these major differences do not prevent Christians from accepting communists as persons. To accept communists not as enemies but as persons enables Christians to live with and work with them accepting them for what and as they are and at the same time bearing witness to what they as Christians hold to be true. The theology of these Christians is that Jesus Christ and not the western powers is their hope. Even though they

are cut off from the West they are not cut off from hope; for as in the West there also in the East behind the Wall, they have Christ. Thus, having Jesus Christ, East Berlin Christians see their task to be one of daily witness to their Lord believing that God will provide them with the power and freedom to bear this witness. With this theology, Christians are able to live in the communist state, at least where such a life does not come into conflict with Jesus Christ.

Even as we talk of this problem of the church in East Berlin, do we not see a similar problem facing the church of the United States? Are we not concerned with the questions--How can the church be the church of Jesus Christ in the world? As Robert Spike has expressed it, the church needs to be in the world but not of the world. The church needs to minister to and within the society wherein it finds itself; at the same time it must prevent (by the grace of God) this society from overcoming or should we say taking over, the church. Few of us believe the answer for the church in western society is withdrawal and rejection. We search for ways that the church can make some impact, some impression upon society. Rather than withdrawal and rejection we attempt to separate from the church those things that are of the world (and not of Jesus Christ) and yet remain in the world where we believe Christ calls us to be. This is much the concept of the Church that is being developed in East Berlin. In neither situation, whether in East Berlin or in the United States, is this without its dangers, or pitfalls, or sacrifices.

In East Berlin the church is under obvious pressures of a society that attempts to destroy it and its mission in the world. Yet I cannot but feel that here in the West the church likewise is under pressure, more subtle, but no less effective and not less dangerous to its mission. Yet to withdraw from society is not possible, not if the church is to remain the church. It must continue to live and to live in the world--without becoming of the world. As the church, East Berlin Christians feel they are called to live in a hostile society that they might

enable God to work in this way through them behind the Wall. At one point in our Seminar it was noted that as we go through the "Wall" we need to remember that here too God has given power to the people to bear witness to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to their world. Perhaps my greatest insight during the entire Seminar was that God is in actuality no more limited in East Berlin than He is on this side of the Wall. It is only by the grace of God that the church exists at all--whether it be in East or West.

Fred Noll

#### CAPITALISM AND/OR COMMUNISM

Walking through the streets of East Berlin, I came upon a placard displayed in a fashionable department store. This placard was a drawing of three muscular arms. On one arm was printed the letters, U.S., and in the hand was an atomic weapon. Another hand firmly gripped the wrist of the U.S. arm, symbolizing power that halts war-mongers. Above was a third hand letting loose a dove of peace. To the American, the latter hands would be the Communist's propaganda to the people of their desire for peace against the war-like imperialist nations. However it might be said that the two arms symbolizing peace bore neither hammer and sickle, not any other Communistic symbol. What does this have to say?

We, the American people are led to believe that the Communist cause is evil and the American cause is God's blest. We justify the Gulf of Tonkin incident by saying they fired first and we merely retaliated. Yet does this not raise questions? How have we been able to justify the U-2 flight or the invasion of Cuba. In fact, the New York Times, International Edition, September 26-27, 1964, reports that the Defense Department has received contradictory reports concerning the latest incident at Tonkin. An indirect answer to these questions might be that just as the Communists slant the news to best promote the Communist cause, so too, the American news agencies are subjective in their report. However, I am sure that no one was ignorant of

this fact.

Considering this American slant of the news presentation, what can be said of the Berlin Wall? Personally observing a woman waving a handkerchief to friends and/or relatives on the Eastern side, it would go without saying that this is a deplorable situation. Without a doubt there are many families and/or friends that are unable to visit with each other as they had been able to do before 1961. Yet the question might be asked; why did the East German government raise a wall? Are they so sadistic?

Communism and capitalism are diametrically opposed philosophies of economy. West Germany follows a capitalistic economy for the most part, East Germany a communist. Where there is the opportunity to "get rich quick" the most spirited and usually the most gifted will flock. It was reported to our seminar class that a large number of East Germany's educated young people crossed the border to "seek their fortune" in West Berlin. If the "cream of the crop" in a particular section is lost, what will happen to that section, especially if the economic system of that section be materialistically inclined? Obviously it would be a mutilated part of a non-existent whole. It must be remembered that 10% of the East German population are devoted to the communistic system, and there are others who are neither in favor of American Capitalism or Russian Communism. They too desire a prosperous economy, and if their belief differs from the American suggestion of capitalism, then they are entitled to their convictions. The East German wall has fairly successfully shut off the flow of immigration and East Berlin, the small section of East Germany we were able to visit, had displayed in some ways the fruits of the wall. That is to say, the products of the educated have remained in East Berlin.

That materialism is the religion desired by the government of East Germany cannot be denied. Even though opposed to this philosophy, we as Christians must view the situation in East Germany, and in all Communist countries, with an open mind. Instead of filling them with false hopes that the wall will come down, we should

instead remind them of Jeremiah's letter to the Babylonian captives, for it is the Christian's duty to prosper the country he lives in, regardless of whether it is his native land or a foreign country, regardless of whether its economic system is capitalist or communist. As the East Berlin Christian displays in his life the love of Christ, he is witnessing to the non-believer. There is no governmental system that has all the truth, but it is the Truth which the Church in East Berlin and America is to proclaim.

George Schmidt

## PERSPECTIVES

One must be careful to note that a month in Germany is not enough time nor enough experience to enable student to become an expert on German theological education or the contemporary developments within German theological circles. However, one does receive, rightly or wrongly, certain impressions which may be stated.

We often view history in abstract terms. The term itself is often associated with causation theories and dry lists of facts. Despite the efforts of our college and seminary professors, many of us are guilty of falling into a sophomoric understanding of history which is unfortunately divorced from life and living traditions.

To generalize, we may note that the German student may be more aware of history than is his American brother. Part of this is due to the fact that the German student is reared within sight of ancient ruins and within the shadows of great museums and buildings which boast the history of his country and her long history and culture. The occasional shell of a building stands as a reminder of man's failure to live with man. The shell may be the result of a 10th century battle or a bombing in 1945. Newspapers, magazines, and short film features remind the German student of the period of National Socialism (1938-1945). The wall in Berlin reminds the student of the present conflicts. These printed and physical monuments cease to be abstract facts, drawings, and names. They are living symbols of the very real events which have determined the future of the student's country and they are symbols of the forces with which the student is called to deal.

The American student is justified when he argues that he too has a history and that he too must deal with traditions and problems similar to those of his German brother. The American student, however, must remember that his history is not identical with that of the German's. Perhaps one of the values of the European Seminar

is the fact that it enables the students to sense their similarities and to understand their differences.

Moreover, the Seminar enables the student to deepen his understanding of history and the relation of the Church with the historical process. General facts become clearer and general truths about the Church in history begin to become real issues for the student. This was seen in many of the theological discussions between German and American students. The Germans spoke from within a long history of Church-State relationships and from within a tradition of order, liturgics, and orthodoxy which has authority and on occasion has become rigid and isolated from the reality of the world (i.e., the relation of the State Church with National Socialism). The Americans spoke from within a short history of a more "free church" tradition which has tended on occasion to make individualism and democracy theological principles. While the American students must fight the dangers of a "free church" tradition, the German students must fight the dangers of rigid forms and wooden orthodoxy. Hence, it was necessary to understand the tradition from within which each student spoke. Having done this, the terms and phrases the students used could be understood. For example, a group of Americans mentioned their liturgical views to a group of Germans. The terms reminded the Germans of wooden forms, stale orthodoxy, and the isolation of the Church from the world. It was not until several hours had been spent in discussing the traditions from which each group came that the Americans could discuss liturgics which could be understood as living liturgics which are relevant to the work-a-day life of man. Likewise, the Germans were misunderstood when they discussed "new forms" and fear of the church. After they had communicated their history and illustrated that they were advocating not withdrawal from Christ's Church but re-vitalizing a wooden institution, the Germans were understood.

It is difficult to summarize such

impressions in an article of this nature without making terrible generalizations. Yet, it is possible to say that the Seminar did strengthen our awareness of the complex forces of history within which the Church lives and with which the Church must deal. We also realized how essential it is for us to understand the traditions from which our Christian brothers speak to us and from which we speak to them.

---Harry Royer.

# SEMINAR ABROAD ITINERARY

August 27 - Arrive Frankfurt. Fly to Berlin. Speech by Mr. Hammer. Tour of West Berlin.

August 28 - Reception by Senat of Berlin. Tour of West Berlin Churches. Attended a concert in the evening.

August 29 - Visit to East Berlin, private talks in Christian families.

August 30 - Church service in East Berlin and tour of East Berlin by boat.

August 31 - Leave Berlin at noon. Fly to Hannover. Met by Pastor Ranke, Prasidialvikar. Travel by bus to Bielefeld. Visit Bergen-Belsen. Introduction to structure and work of the Westphalian Church.

September 1 - Travel. Tour Freidrich von Bodelschwingh Institution for Epileptics. Dr. Thimme spoke on "The Light and Dark Side of a Volk-skirche." Reception Evangelical Church of Westphalia. To Cologne.

September 2 - Cologne area. Stayed at Schloss Gracht.

September 3 - Travel. Bonn area. Rhine trip by steamer. Arrive Heidelberg.

September 4 - Short tour of Heidelberg.

September 5 and 6. - Free.

September 7 - Speaker - Dr. Pfarrer Lell "Protestants and Catholics in Germany"  
Dr. Robert Starbuck "Christian Existence in a Marxist World"

September 8 - Speaker - Professor D. Holsten "Church and Mission in Germany"

September 9 - Speaker - Dr. Lowe "Unity of Church According to Theology of St. Paul"  
Professor Pfeiffer "The Church According to Bonhoeffer"

September 10 - Tour of Worms and Speyer. Speaker - Prof. D. Marxsen "Concerning Exegesis"

September 11 - Speaker - Prof. D. Marxsen "The Question of Easter," and "The Question of Holy Communion."

September 12 and 13 - Free.

September 14 - Speaker - Dr. Eberhard Muller "Church and Labor Relations."

September 15 - Speaker - Prof. Dr. Westermann "The Meaning of Hermeneutics in Theology."

September 16 - Speaker - Dr. H.H. Walz "Der Deutsche Evangelische Kirchentag - historical developments and theological implications."

September 17 - Speaker - Pastor Rohrbach - "The German Student Congregation."

September 18 - Travel to Gossner-Haus, Mainz-Kastel area. Speech on "Church and Industry." Stay at Haus der Jugend, Frankfurt.

September 19 and 20 - Evangelical Academy Arnoldshain. Return to Heidelberg evening of 20th.

September 21 - Speaker - Mrs. Prof. K. Bornkamm "Word and Faith According to Martin Luther."  
Dr. Slenszka "Development of the Orthodox Church Within the Ecumenical Movement."

September 22 - Speaker - Dr. Schlingensiepen "Church in East and West."

September 23 - Travel - Heidelberg, Black Forest, Strassburg, Basel area.

September 24 - Basel - Lausanne area.

September 25 & 26 - Geneva. Stay at Centre Masaryk.

September 26 - Leave Geneva.

## A PASTOR'S FAMILY IN EAST BERLIN

One of the high points of the Seminar Abroad for many of us was the five day stay in Berlin. I am sure that all of us will never forget the two trips that we took into the Communist Sector of Berlin on August 29 and 30. I will attempt in this article to describe a particular pastor's family that three of us visited in East Berlin. It will be helpful to keep in mind that this is only one experience and that we are describing here only one situation in East Berlin. Moreover, while this article concerns a pastor and his family, it is not to be taken as representative of East Berlin pastor's families in general.

The family which we visited was that of a pastor, his wife, and their two sons. The older son will enter theological school this fall. The younger son is still in high school and plans to study medicine. The pastor is one of three pastors of a particular church in East Berlin. He had originally planned to study for a doctorate degree but the war had altered these plans and he had to accept an assistant pastor's position. He appeared to be well read in theology and his library was perhaps better than an average American pastor's library.

The parish which this pastor is presently serving consist of 15,000 members. However, he told us that an average Sunday's attendance was around 80. Of course he was very much concerned with this problem. He also expressed his concern for the problems of atheism and juvenile delinquency which seem to be very pressing in his particular parish situation.

The living quarters for this particular family were very poor. They had two bedrooms, a very small kitchen, a living room which also served as a dining area, and a small study for the pastor. The pastor told us that his salary was equal to two hundred dollars a month in American money. He had no

car and they had just purchased a TV for which they had worked long and hard. They were not allowed to watch TV programs from West Berlin, but they did so. In fact, we watched a track meet between East and West Berlin with them and the two boys were pulling for West Berlin to win.

In regards to the political situation of East Berlin, this family conveyed to us a despair that cannot be expressed in words. The pastor said again and again, "We don't know what will happen next." When talking about the future the pastor would say, "We'll do this or we'll do that....if we are allowed." While visiting the downtown section of East Berlin with this family, they were careful to point out to us that the new elaborate buildings that had just been built were poorly constructed and in a few years would be in shambles. The older son asked us, "You will tell others when you return?" Then in the next breath he said, "But I don't suppose it will do any good will it?" Finally, when we were about to leave, the younger son gave me his Church Hymnal and said, "When you sing from this book, you will be singing for me."

While this is a very brief sketch of a particular pastor's family in East Berlin, I hope it will give the reader some idea of the problems and fears that are to be faced in the East Berlin parish. However, it must also be remembered that in the midst of these fears and frustrations, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is being preached by families such as the one we have just described. A real witness to this Gospel is being made by many families in East Berlin. But these people need our prayers and support. Will we remember them?

--Joe Wise

## THE OPERA

On August 30, we were in East Berlin, behind the wall. I was entertained in the home of Pastor Breneke and his family. He is the head of the Mission Program for the Evangelische Church in East Berlin. In true German fashion, his family was delightful and most helpful. Kenneth Briggs, John Selassey and I were taken, by foot, through the city. We had two meals with the Breneke family and much conversation.

On our tour, we were accompanied by the two Breneke boys, Gustave and Michael and their friend Rainer Buchholz. All had an interest in music as did we. During the discussion, we discovered that the Stadt Opera was opening that night with a production of Der Berenkovalin. The following night would be a new production of Trabucco. John and I looked at each other. Neither of us had heard this opera but we did know its history. Why would this be given in East Berlin? This opera helped to spur the Italian revolt for unification. It has been used always for this purpose. Its story involved the Hebrews in exile, living in Babylon wishing to return home, wishing to be free. It is an opera expressing oppression, which is the case in East Berlin.

We thought that we should see this. Just that quick, Mrs. Breneke said that we must have tickets and the boys saw to it that we had the best that were available.

Sunday evening we went to the opera. The house was packed. We found our seats even though we missed the overture. In broken German we asked a man about programs. He told us where to get them. At intermission we made a beeline for the programs. We found out that we must buy them; however, we had no East German money. We tried to bargain for them but to no avail. An East German saw our plight and not only bought us programs but also a libretto. We could not thank him enough, but he did not want thanks.

He wanted to talk to someone from the West!

After intermission, we returned to our seats. The opera was done in an ensemble style, so different from in America. You went to the opera, not to hear this or that singer. Applause was only at the end of scenes. Now however, the case would be different. The chorus began their famous Pensiero lament. In a performance of highlights this proved to be the peak. The audience left their reserve behind them. They went wild. The scene looked not unlike the wall, with scaffolding. The chorus looked over this leaning leaning toward their freedom. They sang their hearts out; and the audience went wild. It stopped the show and the whole chorus had to do repeats. The audience went wild again, and finally the conductor left the podium. When the applause ended, he returned and the opera resumed.

The audience, as did ourselves, approved of this fine performance. Besides fine singing, the production was splendid. The sets looked as though they were borrowed from the museum, which we had visited the previous afternoon. We are convinced that ensemble singing is far superior to the star system. This may well be the highlight of our trip.

We also saw productions of Lucia Lammerman Lohengrin in Manheim. This opera was also in German and was difficult to become accustomed to. This proved that Joan Sutherland was not the only coloratura soprano in the world today. This too was ensemble singing. The Lohengrin was acceptable.

Mr. & Mrs. Murrie reported an excellent production, with American singing, of Faust in Vienna. This production sported a great Ballet group.

This by no means exhausted our musical tour of Europe. We all attended several concerts. They ranged from



excellent to poor but showed us a real lack in America and its music. For example, Manheim had its own full-fledged opera and Ballet companies and a drama group playing repertory. This town had two stages going nightly. Heidelberg, twenty minutes away by tram, has a company day opera, operatto and drama, also an orchester and a chamber ensemble. No matter where one turned there was music or drama of some sort.

Ken Hill



A WEEKEND EXCURSION

Cuckoo clocks, wood carvings, a pair of torn pants, a bumpy ride on crooked roads, an unexpected experience with a farm family which created new friends, and a deeper understanding of fellow classmates were some of the results which seven theological students discovered on a week-end tour of Southern Germany. The first free week-end which we had gave us the opportunity to visit areas which might be of interest to us. So, six seminarians and a German student pooled their marks, rented a bus, and then headed toward the famous enchanting Black Forest. In a matter of hours we found ourselves slowly making our way around the mountains on narrow, crooked roads which seemed to have been so placed between the tall, graceful trees that all visitors were able to capture the beauty of the intriguing black mass; it was then that we realized why this famous forest was so named. The deeper we went into the forest, the more we were impressed by the scenic view, and again and again we traveled through quaint, colorful villages which helped us capture the spirit of this much visited attraction.

After spending much of the morning in the Black Forest, and after buying cuckoo clocks and wood carvings, we decided to move on to see more of historic Germany. We then looked at a map to chart out the remaining part of our trip; it was at this point that we decided to make our tour a little different so that we would long remember it. We discovered that we were very near the French and Swiss borders, so we decided to visit both countries. We had had lunch in Germany, and we thought it would be good to have meals in the other two countries--dinner in France and breakfast in Switzerland. This would be something that we would remember for years, for it is not every day that an American is able to eat three consecutive meals in three different countries.

In a few hours with the help of our German student, who proved to be an excellent guide, we found ourselves in Strassburg, France. Here we made a

tour of the city and had our evening meal in a small French cafe. This made the second part of our plans complete, and as the last rays of the sun disappeared behind the mountains the tired but excited group headed toward the Swiss border.

We traveled that evening until 8:00, and after reaching a point which would enable us to reach the Swiss border for breakfast the next morning we stopped to inquire about hotel accommodations. We were then in Freiburg, a fairly large city and had no expectations of what was in store for us. The first hotel we found displayed the sign "alles besetzen". However, the next one did not, so we breathed a sigh of relief. Gert, our German friend, went in first to make the arrangements, but he soon discovered that this hotel was also full. Again and again we found a hotel; Gert went in and returned with the same story---"alles besetzen". After trying all the hotels which we could find in Freiburg, we decided to go to the next village, which was a few miles away and attempt to find rooms there; and again we found the same story---"alles besetzen." At this point we began to worry, for it was getting late and none of us were excited about spending the night in a V.W. bus. So we traveled on to a third town and again were turned away by the same two German words, "alles besetzen."

It was then suggested that we leave the autobahn and go to a small village, because our chances of finding rooms might be better. So when we came to the next secondary road, we crossed our fingers and started in an unknown direction hoping that we would soon find some accommodations. We traveled for almost an hour without finding a village, and by this time we were on pins and needles. This apprehension was somewhat relieved when we came upon a well lighted tavern, and the big question in all our minds was "will we or will we not?" As we stepped from the V.W. wagon we immediately heard loud laughter coming from within, and upon entering the smoke-filled room we saw several German farmers sitting around a table drinking beer and smoking pipes, having a gay-time.

m We found a table, and when the bartender came, Gert explained to him our situation and asked where we might find rooms. The bartender told us that there was no village near, but there was a possibility that we could get rooms at a farm home. This sounded great, because it was then 10:30 and all of us were exhausted. We were given the direction to the farm and soon we found ourselves in the barnyard hoping that this would be the end of our desperate search.

Gert and Don went to inquire about rooms while the remaining five waited. Twenty minutes went by and not a word from inside the house. Then our minds began to wonder what had happened to our friends.

Our anxiety was deepened when James and Janet became sick. We were miles away from any town with two persons sick and two persons inside a stranger's home. This wasn't all! Forest and I then decided to go down to the house to find out what had happened, and as we made our way through the darkness we came upon a cliff which was very near the path to the farm house. This really upset us; and as we hurried back to the bus to get a flash light, Forest ripped his trousers. It seemed that everything was happening to us.

Our report didn't bring too much comfort to the remaining three. We got a flash light and started back down the hill scared half to death, but before we reached the cliff we heard two familiar voices. Don and Gert were coming up the path with good news, and they immediately told us that we could all stay there. Much bargaining had been done by our German friend, and we were able to spend the night.

The farm home was a typical German one--with the barn attached to the home; it was a clean, well kept dwelling. However, it was strange to know that we were sleeping in the same building with the cattle and chickens.

The next morning we all awoke fresh and ready to go. We talked a while with the German family (using the

little German which we knew) and before we left we felt that we had found new friends.

Before we left the farm home we decided not to go to Switzerland, because we had accomplished our objectives. So we returned to Heidelberg after spending an enjoyable week-end, one that we will never forget. We not only had an exciting trip but we were enriched by having gained a deeper understanding of one another.

---Jim Rosser

#### DR. MARXSON -- A CONTROVERSIAL STAND ON THE FINDINGS OF EXEGESIS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Dr. Marxson is one of a group of Biblical scholars who views Biblical exegesis as the continuing task and hope for obtaining more truthful and precise realization of Jesus' words and deeds, believing that such exegetical work can get us back to the written witnesses to Jesus. These can be dated about ten years after Jesus' death, and they can give us more information about the witness of the eye and ear witnesses who passed along their interpretation of the person Jesus, whom they saw and heard, by oral transmission.

Dr. Marxson gave three lectures. The first was on the Control of Exegesis, and the following two dealt with two specific applications of his method of exegesis to the problems of the Lord's Supper and the Resurrection of Jesus as historical event. The Synoptic writers were not just editors of the written material about Jesus at their disposal, but were active theologians. They brought out their theological views, he says, by the manner in which they edited and compiled their sources. The result is a very wide range of affirmations within the Synoptic Gospels. We don't listen, really listen to what the New Testament writers are saying, but to our tradition and then go to the New Testament to support our tradition. Marxson includes that, because exegetical studies have shown varying and contradictory views in the New Testament, it

is clear we cannot build our dogmatics theology directly in the New Testament. He criticizes most of those who quote Scripture, since they for example, claim that Paul says thus and so, instead of saying more precisely that Paul in I Corinthians says thus and so. We have to take more seriously, the fact that the New Testament is a collection of twenty-seven different writings, belonging to different types of literature, authors and readers, and was not written all at once. Thus we must be certain to whom each writing is addressed and the particular situation at hand, and this is the task of exegesis. Each book of the New Testament was meant only for a certain circle of readers in a certain situation at a certain time, claims Marxson. He gives the examples of Romans and Revelation, written at different times when different relations existed between the church and the state. The time when Paul wrote Romans was one of relative peace between the church and the state, while the time when Revelation was written was a time of hostility between the church and state.

Marxson holds that we can get out of any New Testament writing only what the author interprets as Christian truth to that certain group in that certain situation to whom he is addressing the writing. Marxson asks of each New Testament writing whether or not it has remained true to the basic matter of the Gospel. He says we don't say in the Apostles Creed "I believe in the Bible", but "I believe in Jesus Christ." Through the New Testament writings Marxson states, we learn of the (matter) basic fact of Jesus Christ, namely that Jesus has brought God, faith, and reconciliation of man with God, to man. For Marxson, the meaning of Jesus' proclamation and effect was that people should be reconciled with God now, that now forgiveness of sins is given, that now Jesus puts us in a position of faith, and that everything that Jewish people expected in the future has become reality now. He holds that Jesus at no time thought of making into a cult or church this proclamation. It is from this basic fact of Jesus Christ that we control the individual affirma-

tions found in the New Testament, to see if what the particular writer says in the particular passage or section corresponds to the basic matter of Jesus.

Marxson emphasizes that we can know Jesus only as he is received and this is primarily through the earliest (the eye and ear) witnesses. The earliest starting point we can arrive at, in our quest for the actual words and deeds of Jesus, is the encounter between Jesus and the earliest eye and ear witnesses. The later writings (reflections) concerning the person and work of Christ have to be judged, says Marxson, as to whether they have kept the original, basic fact of Jesus.

Marxson believes each culture expresses in terms of its own concepts the same thing in order to preserve that same thing. He shows how all the New Testament texts, concerning the Lord's Supper, indicate the Supper as being instituted by Jesus, but also how they say different things about it. The words "Body" and "Covenant" in texts on the Lord's Supper, mean the same thing, but the former is the Greek way of saying it, and the latter is the Jewish way. Today we must ask, says Marxson, whether either or both of these categories are capable of conveying divine reality to confront us, or whether there are other categories more capable. Also, we must ask whether the meal itself has power to bring fellowship today. For example, a Westphalen Church in Germany uses beer and ham in their celebration of the Lord's Supper. Marxson repeats again his main emphasis, that the basic fact of Jesus is that he brings one into relation with God, and that people express this in different ways, with the New Testament as the prime example of this.

Marxson views the church as the fellowship of those who, through Jesus, have been called by God to the eschatological life (the life in the Kingdom of God to come at the end of historical time) in this world. For him, the Holy Spirit is the coming to faith, and is not connected with the knowledge of the content of faith. For example, when one experiences the essence of the Lord's Supper, then one can say he has experi-

enced the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Marxson believes that it does not matter whether one is a Christian or non-Christian exegete, but the Christian does have a decisive advantage when determining the significance of the particular New Testament passage or section being studied. Concerning the resurrection of Jesus, Marxson believes that the concept of the bodily resurrection of Jesus was an interpretive effort to explain something that can be explained in various ways. The only thing we can be sure of, historically, is that a number of people claimed to have seen the resurrected Jesus. They interpreted the appearance of Jesus to them with the concept, the resurrection, which already existed, especially strong in Jewish apocalyptic. Another group would not believe the body is any good, so would hold to a different concept along the lines that Jesus was liberated from the prison of his body and lives visibly. The appearances of Jesus to certain groups after his crucifixion are occasions for them to reflect on how it happened, and also become the occasion for being sent to bring what Jesus brought. The disciples, become Jesus' witnesses, continuing his work in his place. Everything Jesus brought to his disciples, they, and those who believe after them, the church in other words, now bring to other men. The resurrection concept was used to state that Jesus makes the future of God already present, the end has come with Jesus. The resurrection event is a bridge, upon which Jesus brought (the basic fact of Jesus mentioned earlier in this article), is carried across to a later time. Jesus comes over the bridge, as witnesses through their preaching, bring Jesus' offer to other ages. The resurrection, for Marxson, is saying really that Jesus lives for me, as someone who addresses me today, and not that at some past time Jesus was resurrected. Most important, is the preaching of Jesus, both his own and that which preaches him, because preaching is the place God happens today, through Jesus. When the basic fact of Jesus is communicated to the

congregation, then it is that resurrection has taken place. Our task then, claims Marxson, is to proclaim Jesus, for in our proclamation of Jesus, resurrection can take place. In other words, concludes Marxson, I preach because Jesus has been proclaimed to me as a living one, and becomes such to others through my preaching.

In my opinion, Dr. Marxson will be an active and important man with whom to cope in New Testament studies in the next few decades. Hopefully, his previous and future works will be translated into English, so that interested persons can encounter his method and the views which result from it.

---Gregory Kendall

## THE MEANING OF HERMENUTICS IN THEOLOGY

Dr. Westerman's lecture on the meaning of hermenutics in Theology illumined many a dark corner of the many narrow winding roads of our Heidelberg lectures. Symbolically, he showed how the many roads of human tradition and expressions of knowledge seem to radiate out of the center of all theological concern: the occurrence of God's word and deed. Our God is a God who speaks and acts. Our reverence and confession is to a God who has spoken and acted. While "speaking" and "acting" are anthropomorphic terms, we have no words or sentences to convey our knowledge of God apart from our human vocabulary. There is no divine language. We have only words spoken by and handed down by men which are available through historical research and literary records.

The science of hermenutics is related to the whole field of the human phenomenon of understanding. Understanding belongs to theology as a whole and is not limited to Biblical interpretation. The proper relation of hermenutics to theology as a whole connects and unites all fields.

To help with our grasp of the process of understand, Dr. Westerman described three concentric circles of understanding. These define three different types of knowledge about God's words and deeds.

The inner circle is related to the immediate sense of God's word and deed. Included in this experiential type of understanding are all forms of worship as they are a dialogue of word and answer.

The middle circle comprises tradition. These are words and deeds coming through a gap of time. Requiring a greater degree of understanding, tradition may be conveyed by teaching of a younger generation directly by the older generation or may require considerable research and study.

The outer circle presents the doctrines of the church. This type of understanding comprises the whole wide context of spiritual life, the proclamation of the word to the world, as well as general philosophy, philosophical concepts, the history of human thought and

interpreted history.

We may now consider the application of hermenutics to six areas of theological concern.

(1) Understanding in the Realm of Worship. The enlightenment period attempted to cut off understanding from all traditions of worship. Only purely scientific forms were recognized. Yet it was only in the last decade that liturgical forms were found to be buried in the Biblical texts. Then forms may have guided the structure of content of a group of texts. Von Rad, in his commentary on Deuteronomy, discovered the liturgy of a cultic feast. A whole book, Lamentations, is liturgical in form. Sections of the New Testament have been shown to present the form of baptismal liturgy.

Corresponding to the two declarations that God has spoken and acted, there is a dialogue aspect of every act of worship. Grounded in understanding, the congregation presupposes a yes to what God has done. Then is a danger however is the tendency to merely say amen rather than an act of an affirming participation of a hearty response.

The expansion of an amen or yes provides the form of creedal confessions. Every confession of faith presupposes God's speaking and acting. Confessions becomes only ritual without understanding or action in worship.

All forms of proclamation presupposes understanding. Furthermore, understanding is the innermost expression of faith. This is speaking one's own personal yes as he joins the congregation in worship.

(2) Historical understanding of Theology. At present there are two contrasting views of understanding Biblical texts. Barth on one hand views human speech as having attained it as normal meaning and function only in scripture, thus understanding is to be found within the Bible. Bultman however, stresses the historical character of the Biblical witness: since the understanding of the Bible is always based on study of human words by human men, it is not necessary to claim a special biblical hermenutic

or traditional hermenutic, therefore only a general hermenutic is needed. Westerman suggests that both these views need modifications, utilizing full awareness of the three types of understanding. Barth must take seriously the fact that there is no pure Biblical hermenutic: for at all times extraneous interpretation has been interjected. St. Paul for example has a storic understanding, not a Biblical understanding of the Old Testament as he interprets it in the New Testament. To Bultman, it must be shown that there is not just a general hermenutic on one doctrine of hermenutics. For one must also understand that which happens in the context of Christian worship, the event where God speaks and acts and men respond.

(3) Three forms of Confession are found in various communities: Liturgy, preaching and doctrine. The Eastern Orthodox churches stress the representation and reacting of God in their liturgy so that exegesis of Biblical texts never occurred. Roman Catholic exegesis did not get its impulse from liturgy but from dogmatics. It was from the task of preaching the Gospel that Protestants sought to bridge the gap from the original texts to our contemporary life. Hermenutics always occur within a community with its own understanding of its history.

(4) The task of understanding must change with time. The first generation Christian communities experiences no single form of hermenutic principle. Their interpretation of the Old Testament varied considerably in the New Testament writings.

It was the task of the reformers to restore the honor of God's word spoken to his people. In order for the word of God to be heard by the ordinary workers and housewife, it was important for the Bible to be understood and translated. Only then could a person be confronted both with the righteous judgment of God which condemns man as a sinner and presents the good news of justification by faith in Jesus Christ. Dr. Westerman commented later that it was unfortunate that the Protestant churches which followed Luther attempted to dogmatize his contemporary writings in the Roman Catholic fashion rather than follow his example of scholarly

translation of Holy Scripture which was Luther's prime concern to his dying day. Thus the church stands with a void of scholastic theological activity in contrast with the progress that the other branches of human understand have made since the age of enlightenment.

(5) Historical-Critical Exegesis is not new. This is the heritage also of the reformers. The word must be heard in its own context--not proof text. Thus the real understanding may be applicable to contemporary life. Luther showed in his treatment of the Epistle of James that we cannot avoid forming critical evaluation of even the Holy Scriptures.

(6) Scientific literary exegesis has established a decisive point: there is no one holy language. This concept was also fully established by the reformers. Even the ordinary churchgoer then was aware that the Bible was a book in several languages. They knew that in addition to their German book and Latin book there were predecessors in the Hebraic Old Testament and Greek New Testament. This is an understanding that every one of our contemporary Christians should be aware of in many ways, beginning with their earliest Christian Education. Thus one may perceive what the Bible really is and bring its message into reality.

The church needs to recover its dialogue between exegesis and all forms of philosophy with the differences understood. Even the differences between exegesis and doctrine must be understood. It is no longer possible to see the relation of exegesis and doctrine in the traditional sense. The functions of creeds as man's response of thinking and acting must be understood from both sides. The Old and New Testament witness must be truthfully represented and their proclamation must be living. One must be ready to answer the question whether the trinitarian confession of the apostolic creed is an absolute abstracted from the historical situation, or an unfolding of the understanding of the primitive sentence, "Jesus is Christ." What this means can only be rightly understood by study of the Greek New Testament as a whole; but even here, *Cristos* is an Old Testament term of Judaism.

Dr. Westerman asked if it is necessary for the retention of these two different languages and this systematic and theological thought patterns which always result in diversion. Or, is it possible to find a starting point of understanding and hermenutic agreement for translating the concepts of being and nature into a message of contemporary forms of thinking and expression. Are the Judiastic and Greek concepts, and Latin and German Doctrines binding for Christian faith forever to express the doctrines of God, faith, and the church?

- Roger C. Preuss

### KIRCHENTAG

"Kirchentag? What is Kirchentag?"  
You may ask.

Perhaps a clearer understanding of the name, "Kirchentag" will be possible if we give some thought to the etymology of the word "Tag" as it is used in the German language. In the German language the word is used not only as the meaning of "day", but also is closely related to the word, "Diet", meaning a gathering of people or an assembly. For example, the "Diet of Worms", during which Martin Luther made his declaration, "Here I stand..." To understand "Kirchentag" it must be approached with this latter definition. In other words, Kirchentag is an assembly of people gathered together for a particular purpose, and this purpose is to witness to the World as the Church.

For a description of what gave rise to this movement I shall give a brief history in outline.

Kirchentag began during the years when Germany was involved in the revolution of reform (1843). During this time each of the small political divisions of Germany were independent countries, governed by their respective prince. The prince was not only the ruler, but it was his religious belief which also determined the religious position of the country, e.g. if the prince was Roman Catholic

all the people of his country would also have to accept the Roman confession. On the other hand, if the prince was a Protestant (Lutheran) all the people would have to accept the Lutheran confession. This religio-political situation caused many difficulties; therefore, in 1848 the first Kirchentag was assembled in an attempt to secure some form of national unity.

The attempt at unity failed but out of this assembly did come the work of Inner Missions, a missionary venture which later spread to all parts of the world. Kirchentag continued to assemble every few years, but lacking any definite plan it faded into history and died. The cause which has been suggested was economic prosperity. The last Kirchentag of this first series was held in 1872.

In 1921 Kirchentag was again revived. This time in order to reorganize the church which had been uprooted by the First World War. The reorganization was completed along conservative lines, however not all of the groups subscribed to the new reorganized church. Yet the groups which did not agree joined together with the organized church becoming a kind of representative assembly. It was this assembly, which met periodically, that formed an opposition to the "German Christians" of the Hitler regime. Under the stress of governmental pressure it ceased to function on the surface, but underneath it did function, e.g. In some areas of youth work the church was capable of placing leaders. This, however, must not be understood as a strong influence or to be viewed as being similar to the Kirchentag of today.

The Kirchentag in its present form began in 1950. It was held in the city of Essen in the form of a mass rally. The planning for this rally began a number of years before in 1954, again out of crises as had the previous movements. However this time a more detailed plan was developed including not only the rally but also discussion groups. A schedule was planned and with the cooperation of Roman Catholic leaders there is now a mutual exchange of personnel and ideas. If I were asked to give an example of Kirchentag today, I would point to the 1961 Kirchentag in Berlin.



The city of Berlin in 1961 demonstrated that the church must and can witness even in a world divided by political ideology. For here in Berlin was a witness by the church which crossed not only the political divisions but also the theological and doctrinal divisions which beset the church. Over 300,000 persons attended the various activities and shared experiences. They came from all the areas of Germany, with visitors from other countries, forming a united witness to a divided world.

The Kirchentag thereby displays one of its points of strength, the fact that it is a point of communication for witnessing Christians. Second, Kirchentag is a point of sharing, a) concerns, that is the common, everyday experiences of parish and private life, b) problems and possible solutions to these problems, and c) a place where ideas may be exchanged. However there also a third point of strength, the point of experimentation. Within Kirchentag there are the possibilities of experimenting in, a) methods of finance, b) parish participation, and c) methods of making the church more vital in and to daily life.

However, what has been said of a positive nature must also be balanced by what appears to be its major weakness. As has been seen by the previous experience of the Kirchentag that it has spoken only to a people in or after a crises, so now also there is a decline of enthusiasm for the Kirchentag. In other words it has the characteristics of a "popularity" movement. This last comment is not only my view but one which has also been expressed by the church leaders themselves. But in conclusion it must again be emphasized that Kirchentag is a movement with and for a specific purpose. And although there may be signs of decline its leaders are searching for new ways and means of retaining the vitality which has been present in each of its rebirths.

-George H. Hoffman, Jr.

## IMPRESSIONS OF WORSHIP IN GERMAN PARISHES

This article does not pretend to be an expert or studied opinion of the subject. It is, rather, a general statement of some personal observations drawn during my own participation in the worship services of three German congregations. Not included here are my impressions of the service which I attended in Zurich.

It is not possible to analyze the liturgy of the Evangelical Church in Germany, but suffice it to say that it is an historically oriented piece of work. In many instances I found great similarities with our own order as found in the Book of Worship. The order of the elements in the liturgy is set, but there are a number of places where a choice of prayers or responses is allowed. American Protestants would quite possibly label this service, "High Church", but it is actually normative for the German Church.

The celebration of the Eucharist is, in many parishes, a weekly event. This is done in a manner which enables those who do not wish to receive the Sacrament to leave the nave prior to the beginning of the Liturgy of the Faithful. There is, therefore, a pause of a few moments between the Liturgy of the Word and the latter. During this time those persons who wish to remain for the communion will move forward and sit in the front of the nave, while those not so inclined may exit without causing any disturbance or distraction.

The communion itself is a short service, taking the form of altar communion. The common cup, often two chalices, is used for distribution of the wine. There is, apparently, no squeamishness on the part of German Christians with regard to their fellow communicant's oral bacteria. Generous pieces of bread are used, rather than the small crumbs which are so familiar to American churchgoers.

The worshippers themselves seemed in every instance to be completely familiar with the order of worship and the content of same. Their participation, in most places, approached enthusiasm as far as my American ears could tell. Perhaps some Germans would disagree with this, but I myself have not often heard an American

congregation sing hymns as heartily as do German parishioners or make their responses with such eagerness. It may be safe to say that familiarity has not bred contempt in this situation.

Of the three services in which I participated I must say that the one in East Berlin impressed me most. Here, in a congregation composed mainly of elderly people, was a great spirit of purpose and intention which one could not fail to catch. This was born out not only in the congregational participation, but also in the music which was used and the leadership of the service.

On the whole, and again, my experience is extremely limited, German worship in the churches impressed me as being a meaningful expression for those who do attend church. Those who come to church are not bound by social custom or politeness; it is perhaps far simpler to sit at home on Sunday morning as most church members do. The parish churches are accordingly populated on the Lord's Day by those who truly desire to be there, and this fact is readily apparent in their worship.

Peter D. Mackey

#### IMPRESSIONS OF GERMAN PARISH LIFE

It should be noted at the outset that this article is not the result of an intensive study of German parishes. It is for this reason that the word "impressions" is used in the title. The conclusions which are reached are not those of an expert in the field but rather those of a person who has confronted the German Church and its work for a brief time.

What happens in a German parish? This question is answered by at least one parish in a booklet published in commemoration of recent renovation of the church buildings. Each Sunday morning there are two worship services, and the Eucharist is observed once each month. Confirmation classes are also held on Sunday morning. Two Sundays of each month there is Baptism. During the week the small children of the parish can go to the church for kindergarden classes. At least three of the five

week nights will find a study group or activity for every member of the family. Saturday evenings the young people meet. All of this activity is available to each parish member, which means that in the average parish there would be a potential of three to five thousand participants. However, given the average situation, only five to ten percent of this potential will participate in the activity of the parish. The nominal members justify their abstinence from parish activity on the grounds that the parish is irrelevant for their needs and that it does not speak to their particular life situation in the world. One of the basic problems of the parish then becomes its confrontation of the issues of the society in which it finds itself. It is the problem, stated generally, of the Church and the world.

In Germany, the result has been that the nominal members of the parish have turned to three main church movements: Academies, Kirchentags, and Church-Industry missions. There is not space to go into the details of these movements, but for the purposes of this article it can be said that these movements are not funneling the nominal members back into the parish.

These observations are not intended to be value judgements on the parish situation in Germany. Many reasons can be given as to why the parish is largely an introverted institution. The basic reason seems to be the size of the parish and the paucity of pastors. The pastor's activity is largely confined to his abundance of Baptisms, marriages and funerals as well as his administrative and teaching functions. He cannot possibly visit his total membership or be aware of even the majority of the particular problems of his total membership.

All of this leads the observer to question whether there will come a time when the parish as we know it might die, or if it does not cease to exist, what will be the new form which it takes in its endeavor to witness and minister to the world.

This has only been a capsule summary of one of the basic problems which the parish in Germany faces. But I think we can say that this is our problem

also. The dilemma of the German parish raises basic questions about the nature of the church as it faces contemporary society in its attempts to make the Word and Sacraments relevant.

Carroll E. Kann

## EPILOGUE

By reflecting upon the Seminar Abroad, its many and varied experiences and activities, it is clear that any final conclusion drawn from all of the events of the past month cannot, and should not, be made in only a few written words or paragraphs. Rather, these observations and evaluations of individual members of the Senior Class, looking back upon this first Seminar Abroad and attempting to interpret its different aspects, become a guide and basis for further reflection toward a clearer understanding of the results of the Seminar for us as students, for the Seminary, and for the Church.

Yet in all of the events of the Seminar - from the humorous incidents as we learned to communicate with new friends, such as the time one of our fellow students asked for "ice vasser" and received instead "heiss vasser", to the encounter with East German families sitting down together in table fellowship discussing freely the aspirations, fears, joys, and concerns of living one's Christian faith in a communist country, to the seeing and hearing of the work being done for the mentally ill and epileptic patients at Bethel Village in Westphalia, to the observing and discussing new attempts of the German Church to make the Gospel of Christ relevant to twentieth century man in an emerging industrial society along with the numerous problems they encounter, or to the listening to and discussing with professors and church leaders aspects of theology and church life and work, and perhaps mirroring in our own questions to the German people some of our own concerns and interests here in the Church in our own country, and to the opportunity to sit around a table talking with German theological students, learning from each

other, etc. - by these experiences there seemed to develop a broader awareness and a deeper understanding of how God works in the world today, and how He calls persons from many places to be His servants in a servant Church. And perhaps this Seminar has helped each of us to comprehend more fully that one's neighbor is not only the person next door, but that relationships extend over longer distances as well, even continents.

On behalf of all the members of the Senior Class, I want to express our deep appreciation and thankfulness to the Seminary Corporation, to President Robert V. Moss, Jr., and to the faculty of Lancaster Theological Seminary for placing their confidence in this new venture in theological education, and in us as the first participating students, to all of the individuals and groups who contributed support, both financial and verbal encouragement, to Dr. and Mrs. Lee J. Gable as they gave unceasingly of their time and energy before and during the Seminar, to our German friends for their efforts and fellowship, and to our families and friends without whose aid and assistance this learning experience would not have been possible. And most of all, we thank God that through His grace we have been called to witness to the Lordship of Christ over the lives of us all wherever we may live.

Donald Arey, President  
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