

Religion Update

Rev. Lester Kinsolving's



National attention focused upon Berkeley, California's Arlington Community Church where, in the summer of 1967, Sunday morning worship was dropped in favor of Wednesday evening services. Church attendance promptly increased by 36 percent.

Nevertheless, the United Church of Christ congregation were unhappy over this change and, as a result, Sunday services were later resumed in addition to the midweek ones.

This move has apparently solved a problem that has afflicted many churches. Stated simply, it is that traditional services are boring to the youth and some adults for whom the old ways have lost meaning.

"Innovative worship," with modern music and liturgical experimentation, has alienated many of the older members. Change the music for these. Witness the minister in another church who wanted to relocate the altar, and recognizing his congregation's resistance to change, did so by moving it one inch per month until it had reached its destination.

The Wednesday evening services are innovative indeed—but the Sunday services remain traditional. This avoids a considerable amount of acrimony and intra-parochial strife.

On Wednesday nights, the pews are removed in favor of rugs, on which the congregation sits. The walls are covered with posters, the ceiling with stereophonic projections; the music is generally mad (the congregation sings far more than in most services where singing is left largely to the choir), and the illumination is by strobe lights.

The congregation engages in discussion, mass-embracing (an equivalent of the ancient "kiss of peace") and such special observances as Ash Wednesday in a darkened room (to represent the catacombs) or Good Friday in which there were "stations of the Cross"—with a young girl portraying Jesus, stumbling under the weight of the cross, and sound effects of the crucifixion nailing.

REACTIONS from the Sunday congregation to these Wednesday evening goings-on are varied, but the main tolerant—especially in view of the church's growth in a time of

generally reported decreases in church attendance. One elderly lady smiled and observed: "It's just like the old-fashioned camp meetings—but for worship. I come on Sunday."

Attorney Jack Weldon comments: "My wife likes it, but I am a traditionalist; it just isn't church to me. Yet we both often go to both services, and there are many moving moments when you get to know people better than in a coffee hour."

Mrs. Weldon: "When I come out of one of those Wednesday evening services, I feel like I want to hug everybody!" Then, she added: "But I also need the calmness and renewal of Sunday morning."

DR. JAMES RICHARDSON, chairman of the church's board of deacons, notes that the Wednesday evening services have the strong point of person-to-person relationship rather than most of the congregation remaining passive and leaving most of the worship to the choir and the minister. "On the other hand, he says: "If all services are that innovative, you can lose a great many of the older people—who are just as important as the others."

Most Unusual Ministry Marks 30th Anniversary

BY JOSEPH RADELET ST. JOHN SEMINARIAN

In this article, I would like to pursue the question of the relationship between religion and social problems, begun in the July 25-26 weekend edition of the Observer newspapers.

The point I would like to make is concerned with how religion can become involved in combating social problems. The war in Vietnam can provide an example.

THE TASK before it is to bring the gospel message to bear on the matter of the war in Vietnam. If the gospel message has nothing to say on the matter of this war, then we are bound to admit that Christianity—whose task is to save all nations—cannot utter a word about the most crucial action in which our country has been involved during the last decade.

Christians were evidently silent in Germany during World War II about Nazism. There was obviously a contrast between the gospel message and the Nazism of Hitler, but few Christians spoke out in these terms.

Their task, as ours should be in the matter of the Vietnam war, was to bring the gospel message to bear on the situation.

THE GOSPEL should be examined as to how it may pertain to an action such as the Vietnam war. The values of the gospels should be gleaned out: peace-making, forgiveness, compassion, love for neighbors and of enemies, doing good to those who hate you, and the fact that Jesus accepted a death on the cross so that He would rise again.

How do these biblical values stand in the face of the war in Vietnam? The answer is not simple.

Some Christians have replied as pacifists, saying that the gospel proclaims that no Christian may fight in a war.

Other Christians have replied that Jesus was against the work of the devil, communism is the work of the devil and that we as Christians have no choice but to fight in wars against communists.



REV. ELSIE JOHNS (Observer photo by Gerald Gazda)

Other Christians have taken a stance somewhere between these two positions.

SO WHERE does the Christian go? Or, to take a more specific example, where does he go if he does not go in the direction that many do, saying the scriptures have nothing to say about the matter.

The fact that scripture is variously interpreted does not mean that interpretation should not be given. Nor does it mean that all interpretations have equal weight. Some interpretations are closer to the meaning and spirit of the scriptures than others.

Our task is to evaluate which interpretations are most authentic.

Similarly, as our country's Constitution is interpreted in various ways, our position should be to try to find which interpretation is most authentic rather than to dismiss the Constitution as irrelevant just because various interpretations are offered.

Church since that time could be told in any number of ways. There are now 1,225 members, and last year the church was one of five in the Detroit Western Conference to receive more than \$0 in church building funds.

In 1965, the church built its beautiful education structure at Middlebelt and Eight Mile in Livonia. The cost was \$20,000 and the debt is now down to \$75,000 so Elsie and her congregation hope to begin work on the planned new sanctuary by 1971.

In terms of participation and activity, the church can point to five choirs, a Bible school that averaged 400 in daily attendance this summer, two youth camps and regular Sunday and midweek services throughout the year.

"I was there for five Sundays, and no one else came. So I decided to concentrate on the children—I figured if I could get them to come, their parents would come with them."

That led to a visit to the office of the Clarenceville school superintendent in search of a list of names to contact.

"He told me that he didn't know who I was or where I had come from, but he thought I should go back there," she said. "He told me the Clarenceville area was so bad that he had to go to court every week with kids who were in trouble with the law."

"I decided that if that was the situation, I had better stay."

WHEN A COUPLE of families came, Elsie immediately set up a Sunday School for the children, bringing water from home and utilizing a nearby gas station for bathroom services on a certain Sunday.

"I can't do this," she told him.

"Then there will be no services," was his reply. "You have a lot of ability that you don't use unless you are pushed. And I got a green light from the Lord to make you see your ability."

Recalling it later, Elsie Johns said she was sure her pastor "sensed that I could do things but I was afraid."

THERE WAS no thought of fear when her next draft call came.

The year was 1941 and tiny Clarenceville, a Methodist Church, way out Grand River, seemed to be on its last legs. Torn by dissension, the church was about to be closed by the Methodist Conference.

No ordained minister could be sent there, because there was no congregation to pay a salary. So Bill Raymond, I. M. Wade called Elsie, then employed as supervisor of bookkeeping and billing by National Twist and Drill.

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IN ORDER to bring the scriptures to bear on a situation such as the Vietnam war, the Christian congregation may:

- Evaluate the congregation's record over the past few years. What has the congregation done to be a peacemaker? Has the congregation done anything? Has the preacher ever preached on the subject of the gospels in relation to the Vietnam war?
- Center the congregation's efforts around one or two concerted actions during the year. Possibilities are involvement in a political campaign, a series of discussions with the neighborhood draft board, setting up draft counseling services or giving aid to war-torn nations. Among these actions may also come discussions, lectures or movies. Thus, the congregation moves toward being well-informed and active.
- Be patient with conflicting views and try to have several views presented in discussions on preaching. The congregation can then discuss and evaluate on the basis of hearing many views instead of just one.

WHATEVER THE ACTION taken by a Christian congregation, it is important most of all to avoid the "unusual" or "uncommittal" to avoid doing nothing.

Our original point is that the gospel message must be brought to bear on the crucial problems we face today. This is our task as Christians.

ECUMENICAL REFLECTIONS

"Ecumenical Reflections" is a column in which Observers of clergymen and lay leaders are invited to present their views on church and religious topics of general interest. Those interested in writing are invited to send their articles to the Editor, Observer Newspapers, 271 S. Main, Plymouth 48170.

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Attend Church This Sunday

LUTHERAN

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Churches
WISCONSIN LUTHERAN RADIO HOUR WAXX 99.5 FM

LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

In Livonia
CHRIST THE KING
9300 Farmington Road
421-0749
Rev. John A. Ross
Worship Services: 8:15 and 11 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

HOLY CROSS
30650 West Six Mile
Pastor William C. Lindholm
427-1414
Worship Church Services and Nursery: 9:30 and 11 a.m.

ANTIOCH
13 Mile and Farmington Rds.
Pastor Carl Kestel
464-7906 MA 6-5560
Worship Schedule
Sunday Church School 9:30 a.m.

In Redford
ST. JOHN'S
1342 Meridian
Pastor R. K. Jones
538-2642
Worship and Sunday School 9:45 and 11 a.m.

GOOD SHEPHERD
212 W. Six Mile Road
Pastor Geoffrey E. Albert
537-3778 537-6272
Worship Service 10 a.m.

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH
11111 Grand Rd.
Pastor Charles M. Johnson
427-1414
Worship Services: 8:15 and 11 a.m.
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.

AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCHES

CHRIST LUTHERAN
11111 Grand Rd. Redford
Pastor Charles M. Johnson
427-1414
Worship Church School 10 a.m.

ST. JOHN
2225 Oak Road, Farmington
Pastor William D. Wells
Worship 10 a.m.
Sunday Church School 9 a.m.
Phone: 427-1414

SWORD OF THE SPIRIT
34643 Seven Mile Road, Livonia
Pastor William D. Wells
Study for All Ages 10 a.m.
Phone: 427-1414

TIMOTHY
6250 Wayne Blvd., Livonia
Pastor William D. Wells
Worship Services 8:30 a.m.
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Phone: 427-2290 or 423-3194
Nursery Provided

ASCENSION
35301 Five Mile Road, Livonia
Worship 9 and 11:15—Nursery
Sunday Church School
Phone: 423-4517 or 423-9981

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
(Missouri Synod)
39020 Five Mile Rd. Sunday Worship Service
9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.
Office Phone 464-0211
The Rev. Fred Balke, Pastor
Nursery and Sunday School during both services

CONGREGATIONAL

MT. HOPE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
30330 Schoolcraft Road—423-7217
Sunday Service at 10:30 a.m. Worship and Church School
Minister
Rev. Richard Campbell
Helen and Jack Trudgian
Directors of Music

With Your Family
At The Church
Of Your Choice

CHRISTIAN REFORMED

University Hills Church
CHRISTIAN REFORMED
Building on the Campus
Oxford Ridge Campus
Worship Services: 10 a.m. 11 a.m. 7 p.m.
Church School 10 a.m.

REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

CHURCH OF THE SAVIOR
Reformed Church in America
38100 Five Mile Road
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Divine Worship 10:30 a.m.
Evening Study Groups 7 p.m.
Nursery Care is Provided at All Morning Worship Services
464-1062 Rev. Luther Raimeyer, Pastor 427-0122

BAPTIST

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH
43065 Joy Road
Worship Services: 9 a.m. 11 a.m. 7 p.m.
Bible Study 9:45 a.m.
Sunday School 10 a.m.
Worship Services: 9:45 a.m. 11 a.m. 7 p.m.
Bible Study 9:45 a.m.
Sunday School 10 a.m.

NEWBURG BAPTIST CHURCH
37055 Joy Road
Worship Services: 9 a.m. 11 a.m. 7 p.m.
Bible Study 9:45 a.m.
Sunday School 10 a.m.
Worship Services: 9:45 a.m. 11 a.m. 7 p.m.
Bible Study 9:45 a.m.
Sunday School 10 a.m.

Main Street Baptist Church
Affiliated with Southern Baptist Convention
9451 Main Street, Farmington
Phone: 423-4743
The Rev. M. Thurston Pastor
729-2583
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.
Bible Training Union 10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship 7:30 p.m.
Worship Services: 9:45 a.m. 11 a.m. 7 p.m.
DEAR MINISTERS

Community Baptist Church
2837 W. Warren, Farmington, MI 48126
Rev. James B. Allen, Pastor
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.
Bible Training Union 10:30 a.m.
Worship Services: 9:45 a.m. 11 a.m. 7 p.m.

Westland Baptist Church
25375 Ann Arbor Trail
(Between Wayne and Newburg)
Edward M. Degroot, Pastor
Worship Services: 9:45 a.m. 11 a.m. 7 p.m.
Bible Training Union 10:30 a.m.
Worship Services: 9:45 a.m. 11 a.m. 7 p.m.

North Farmington Baptist Church
(American Baptist Convention)
33500 W. Thirteen Mile
(Between Orchard Lake and Farmington Rds.)
9:30 a.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP 10 a.m. Nursery

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Grand River Baptist Church
of Livonia
34500 Six Mile Road
(Next to Stevenson High)
Phone 261-6950

CHURCH SCHOOL CLASSES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY
9:30 a.m. MORNING WORSHIP 10:40 a.m.

AIR CONDITIONED AND NURSERIES

Church Holds Rummage Sale

The Sacred Heart Byzantine Catholic Church, 29125 W. Six Mile in Livonia, will sponsor a rummage and take goods sale on Aug. 8 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The sale will feature a white elephant booth and a bake sale booth along with back-to-school clothes for children, furniture and household items.

WE'RE MOVING!
Kenwood Church of Christ

Welcomes You
to Services at a New Location
20200 MERRIMAN ROAD, LIVONIA
(South of Eight Mile Road)
BEGINNING SUNDAY, AUGUST 23

Bible School 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Sunday Evening 7:30 p.m.
Wednesday Evening 7:30 p.m.
Interim Services with Werners Church 7:30 p.m.

35475 Five Mile Road, Livonia 474-7084