1967-68 REPORT ON THE LUTHERAN MINISTRY AT HARVARD. MAY 1968

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The Lutheran Ministry at Harvard

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UNIVERSITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

A Report on the Harvard Undergraduate Lutheran Committee

May 1968

A year ago a group of Harvard Lutheran students were called together to discuss their individual ministries. What emerged was the Harvard Undergraduate Lutheran Committee or H-U-L-C, affectionately called HULC. The tasks that this group have taken upon itself, I believe, reflect a new attitude derived from a new concern, more realistically atune to the contemporary college environment.

First of all, I am certain that we all realize that an intellectual community, such as Harvard, expresses a sometimes deserved, but at any rate, fashionable disaffection with institutional religion. This expression manifests itself not in hostility, really, but in indifference—as commonly heard: "Church neither interests nor concerns me." It is within this milieu that HULC has been working.

The essential theme of an organization such as HULC, in a community such as Harvard is—"the Christian in the center of the world." Not as the focus of the world but as a man in the world. Specifically, this outlook can be expressed in an informality. For example, early this fall we had a beer party in Eliot House during Freshman Week. About twenty Lutheran freshmen attended, talked about courses and Harvard myths. One of the results of this, we believe, is the fact that University Lutheran has had more freshmen participate this year than ever before. This is an example of an on campus ministry, rightly conceived, it can attract people to participate in our worshipping community.

The focus of present Church-founded experimental attempts to reconcile man with man, and with God is a dynamic outward orientation, not an old time evangelism which frankly, around here, just doesn't work. HULC is made of Christian men who work and affirm and are responsible to, and just plain live in the center of the world. Again, for a campus ministry this means not inviting the freshmen to a Sunday night forum here first of all, but a gathering of those anxious about Harvard, sharing a beer, at Harvard. On a much larger scale this means a speaker series focused on contemporary religious and secular questions which concern students today. In October and November we sponsored four evening programs with Lowell House which were quite successful. The first night we held an admission-free showing of "The Gospel According to St. Matthew," by Pasolini, an Italian communist. Very much to our surprise, 500 people came. On successive weeks Prof. Koester from Harvard spoke on "Perspectives on the Reformation;" Prof. Huston Smith from MIT on "LSD and Religious Experience;" and Prof. Michael Walzer from the government department here, on "Ethics and Power Politics in Vietnam." Besides the very important fact that the programs did draw interested people, the orientation and attitudes behind them were equally significant. HULC worked with Lowell House, at: Lowell House--on the campus. Here was a service to the University, not an evangelical appeal to people to "come to Church."

During the winter, I believe, we demonstrated that we were an organization helping to fulfill a need, not just a church activity being just a church activity. Harvard students, especially seniors, have been very concerned about the draft. In four of the Houses, in the last months, we have held evening discussions. With House members, a Boston Draft Resistance member, Pastor Santmire and with some faculty participation we discussed the topic, "Problems of Conscience and the Draft." Some came simply for information and guidance and free beer; others for a different reason.

Some indict religion because it is merely escapism. There is no doubt that some come to church for that reason. Yet an intellectual community seems to spawn its own defense mechanism, and that is cynicism. The only problem is that when you confront Vietnam or the draft or the urban dilemma, basically moral as well as pragmatic questions, you find yourself in a moral vacuum with nothing to hang your indignation

upon. Perhaps unconsciously, HULC is helping to fulfill this need—relating what seems to be a new Christian message to a new secular society flooded with moral dilemmas.

Next fall we are planning another series appealingly called "Celebration of the Flesh" which will include such topics as the celebration of man in liturgy, poetry, the sexual bond between a man and a woman, and politics. Here is one biblical message that receives too little attention. And we think it is rather meaningful in this day.

So, as an experimental program, JULC is still gaining momentum and looking for new ways of dealing with issues of real concern on the campus. It is very important that we here go out there rather than expecting them to come to our religious center. Maybe then we can break this distinction of "in here" and "out there" and be Christians affirming the power of the life force in the world.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary L. Tuck
Chairman, HULC

5/9/68

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HARVARD UNDERGRADUATE LUTHERAN COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTION

Preamble: When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one church group to break the anonymity which has bound it to no one, and to assume among the powers of the university the separate and equal station to which the laws of Harvard and of HUC entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of Nathan Pusey requires that they state the causes which impel them to this action.

I.. Title

This organization shall be called the Harvard Undergraduate Lutheran Committee.

II. Membership

Membership shall be open to all Lutheran undergraduates in Harvard University and Radcliffe College.

III. Officers

The chief officer shall be a Chairman, chosen in the early spring of each year by a majority vote of members present at that meeting.

The Chairman may as necessary appoint a Program Director and/or Publicity Director to assist him in the planning of and execution of any programs approved by the Committee.

IV. Meetings

Meetings shall be held at the discretion of the officers, but at least twice a year: once in the early fall to go over the fall term program, and once in the spring to determine new officers and discuss the spring program.

All members shall be advised of meetings by mail or telephone.

Persons attending such meetings shall be allowed to vote on all proposals, and a majority of those present shall be necessary to approve a motion.

V. Purpose

The Harvard Undergraduate Lutheran Committee will provide the means by which Lutheran students can organize worship, educational, or social action programs as a service to the university community.

HULC shall attempt to work in conjunction with other university organizations whenever possible.

VI. All activities shall be subject to the rules set forth by Harvard University in regard to undergraduate organizations.

VII. This constitution may be amended at any meeting of the members by a two-thirds vote of the persons present.

approved 4 March, 1968, by HULC

Chaplain's Report

In a paper entitled "Has the Campus Ministry Come of Age?" (included as an append!? to this report) I traced the mainstream of thinking vis-a-vis the Campus Ministry today as a movement to "get where the action is." I think we Lutherans ought to endorse and participate in this movement. But at the same time I think we have something of our own to offer: a ministry which stresses that Christians not only have to get where the action is, but that they are free to "just he", — in particular, "to be together" in a communal life. We might say, then, that a ministry in the university ought to have two foci, exercise of responsibility on the one hand, and celebration on the other; that is, moral action and worship.

The Lutheran Ministry at Harvard over the past year can be schematized with those foci in mind. It should be pointed out, however, that those foci are not necessarily to be equated with "on-campus ministry" and worship-center ministry," although frequently that equation can be made.

A. Worship Center Ministry

Both geography and prudence dictate that the Lutheran Ministry at Harvard should not be separated from the work and worship of University Lutheran Church. Our Church is on campus and also uniquely endowed to offer the celebrative "just being" that the Harvard campus so desperately needs. In this regard, I have found the regular work of preaching and leadership in worship to be indispensable for my own ministry on campus: this is a visible statement of the importance of the worship element. I think the same can be said for upwards of fifty Lutheran students at Harvard; their involvement here can be, and has been, I think, of decisive significance for their overall Christian commitment. In this connection I have been particularly interested in inviting Harvard students to participate publicly in our worship, and this generally has been of considerable significance to them: reading lessons, helping to usher, lending a hand in processions and in the Communion Service. We can see at this point how important Uny-Lu's self-conscious attention to worship, especially as it is encouraged by the Board of Worship, is for the Lutheran Ministry at Harvard. Our Reformation and Easter celebrations were the best, but by no means the only, examples of this.

In a similar vein, University Lutheran Church is specially endowed for the presentation of special art and musical programs, which have been and can continue to be of central importance for the Lutheran Ministry at Harvard. Students who come here can gain a sense that this is a "community that's alive." This year, I am sorry to say, our Musical Offerings program faltered somewhat, mainly because I was not able to spend the time required. Still, we may be able to recoup somewhat with the five outstanding programs remaining this year. Next year I think we will have to establish a "Musical Offerings Committee" with people from this parish and the Harvard community as members.

Students also gain the feeling that this place is alive when they encounter our concern with social action, particularly as we are helped in this direction by the Social Concerns Committee. I might observe here that the energy I and others expended on the Greater Boston Lutheran Dialogue on Vietnam, which I thought was worthy in itself, also had ramifications for the Lutheran Ministry at Harvard: students and others who attend here as well as people outside our community at Harvard, who heard about the Dialogue, were able to gain a picture of a Christian community which cares about the concrete problems of our world. Of course, the Vietnam Dialogue is but one example of several things which might be mentioned, among them our Senior Pastor's deep involvement in the social affairs of the City of Cambridge.

In addition, I think our Student Council program here, which, as it were, spins off our worship activities, continues to be of significance for the Lutheran Ministry at Harvard. True, relatively few participate in it (although 16 of the 34 on the Student Council are from Harvard). But for those who do participate, it is very meaningful. This kind of activity ought to be continued and deepened for the sake of the Lutheran Ministry at Harvard, if for no other reason.

Also the worship-center activities include pastoral counseling, which this year has increased geometrically for me, especially with regard to problems surrounding and unearthed by the draft.

B. On Campus Ministry

Yet for good reason we are committed to enter into the university community, in mission and in service. We want to do more than nourish and challenge the relatively few Harvard students and faculty who normally find their way to University Lutheran Church and participate in our worship and in our programs. To do this, I now know better than ever before, we do need two pastors at University Lutheran Church; one to give his attention as much as possible to the on campus ministry. During Pastor Horn's recent illness, it was my privilege to stand in for him in many parish responsibilities; to do this, I had to allow certain essential on-campus programs, such as one-to-one meetings with students, take a second place, sometimes no place at all. Should the time come for me to move to another place, I would strongly urge this congregation, the Synod, and the NLCM to consider calling a replacement, and not to fall back to a one staff-member situation at Uny-Lu because of the financial pinch.

I have made some minor moves to give the "Lutheran Ministry at Harvard" its own identity; necessary moves, I believe. As indicated, I am using a slightly different name for the Ministry at Harvard so that the community knows right off of our on-campus interests. Likewise for the two hats of my own, "Lutheran Chaplain at Harvard" as well as "Assistant Pastor." Likewise for the use of a university telephone and the anticipated use of a special stationery.

Of more substance, the Harvard Undergraduate Lutheran Committee has come into its own this year. Gary Tuck's report gives a good statement of what the purposes of HULC are and what HULC has tried to accomplish. In addition, I might mention the Bread and Jam Vespers, which physically were at Uny-Lu, but which psychologically and in other respects were an on campus activity. Again this year we averaged about twenty students for six sessions; many of these were students who do not show their faces here otherwise. The theme this year was "the contemporary meaning of Christ." Those who presented the Table Talks were Harvard Chaplains, thus emphasizing our ecumenical interests. It was interesting that in the course of the Bread and Jam Vespers we were joined both by a group of Roman Catholic students and by a group of Inter-varsity Students -- and we didn't pull any punches either time!

Also of substance, we have now organized an "Advisory Committee" composed of Harvard Lutheran Alumni who are still associated with the academic world and of Harvard Faculty. That committee now has a dozen members. We have representatives from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Business School, the Education School, and the Divinity School. We will have our first meeting at the end of this month at the Harvard Faculty Club. This group will advise the Chaplain and also provide moral support for any direct appeal for funds to Harvard Lutheran Alumni.

Another item of some substance: I have participated wholeheartedly in the work of the United Ministry at Harvard and Radcliffe, serving as Secretary for most of this year, recently being elected Chairman for the coming year. I am optimistic

about the potential of the United Ministry, mainly because we have been able to achieve a certain esprit de corps which is the necessary precondition for cooperative action. In addition, we have a part-time secretary for the first time in our history. We have instituted a rather successful walk-in counseling service. And we have sponsored a variety of joint programs, especially our two-year old seminar program. I think in the long run, the course of the Lutheran Ministry at Harvard should run closer and closer to the course of the United Ministry. We have already begun to move in this direction.

I should not fail to mention our newsletter "The Inkling." This should be continued, perhaps dealing more and more with matters of interest to the Harvard community, such as our issue on the Dow Chemical Protest. That issue was sent to some fifty people in the faculty and administration at Harvard, and a number of them took the trouble to write notes of appreciation.

I should also mention the personal counseling which occurs on campus. That has occupied more and more of my time. I have felt, moreover, that I could be of more help this year than ever before, since I have established good liason with a number of officials in the Administration, the Houses, and the Health Center. I should hasten to add, however, that I make it a practice never to contact anyone about a student's problems unless first asking and receiving the student's own permission.

Mrs. Santmire and I have entertained Harvard students on a semi-regular basis this year, and I consider this to be of great importance to any on-campus ministry at Harvard.

In the category of miscellaneous: I have interpreted our work at Harvard to a variety of audiences, to parents' groups, to Luther League groups, and, somewhat abortively, on radio station WBZ. A side note: the Worcester paper reported almost the whole speech I made there, but now I am embarrassed to read the clipping; for, that was before New Hampshire, and I was calling the present generation of students "the Bitter Generation." Things seem to have changed radically.

C. Looking forward to next year

I hope to initiate two experimental programs next year. The first, at Peabody Terrace, the married students dorm at Harvard. We had a Divinity School Intern there this year; and we have learned somewhat from that experience. I hope to be able to hire a non-Divinity School Intern next year to expand the work which was just begun this year. Where I will get the $600 or so this will require, I do not know. Perhaps from Harvard Lutheran Alumni.

Likewise, with HULC, I am looking forward to a first class series in Lowell House next fall under the rubric "the Celebration of the Flesh." This will probably cost us $500. Where that will come from, likewise, I do not know.

I would like to be able to move to an apartment immediately adjacent to the campus. But that will cost money and more money. I almost was prepared to rent a house across from the Radcliffe Library at $300 a month, and then come begging to the Finance Committee for an extra $100 in housing allowance. But the owner raised the rent to $400 a month, not including anything; so I gave up. Where do we go from here in this connection?

D. Thanks

Finally, I would like to thank many people for their assistance and support throughout the year. But I will not do so by name, for that would take too long. Yet what little godly successes in the Lutheran Ministry at Harvard we had this year could not have happened, be it noted, without the concerned interest and efforts of many.

Respectfully submitted,

H. Paul Santmire

5/9/68

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