

A REPORT ON SOME SIGNIFICANT CONFERENCES OF THE LUTHER QUINCENTENNIAL YEAR IN THE UNITED STATES

Editor's Note: Among the notable events of the Luther Quincentennial Year, 1983, were a number of conferences and symposia devoted to Luther studies, both in America and abroad. Obviously, we cannot here provide comprehensive coverage of such conventions, either in the number treated or in the detail which will be given about those we do mention. We feel, however, that it may nevertheless be of interest to our readers to have brief information on at least a small sampling of the special meetings of the Luther Quincentennial.

The following report deals with several conventions in the U.S.A. (at St. Louis, Missouri; Wheaton, Illinois; and Ann Arbor, Michigan), and the subsequent article (pp. 173-183) provides information about two sets of meetings in Europe (at Uppsala, Sweden; and Erfurt, in the German Democratic Republic).

1. QUINCENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF LUTHER'S BIRTH HELD AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

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A Quincentennial Celebration of Luther's Birth, organized by the Center for Reformation Research, was held on the campus of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, on May 31-June 4, 1983. The American Society of Church History, the American Society for Reformation Research, and the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference served as co-sponsors, while funds for the plenary speakers were provided by the Missouri Committee for the Humanities, the state-based arm of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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The purpose of the celebration was to bring scholars, pastors, and laymen together for a look at the most recent work on Luther, his life, and work. After an opening colloquium in which Mark U. Edwards, Jr. (Purdue University), Scott Hendrix (Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary), and Jared Wicks, S.J., (Gregorian University) discussed "Interpreting Luther Today," the participants attended sixteen sessions in which forty-five scholars presented their recent work. Topics included such diverse issues as Luther and Bible Exegesis, Luther and the Jews, Luther and the Ministry, Luther and Catholicism, Luther and Liturgy/Hymnody, Luther and Women, and Luther and the Reformation in Popular Culture.

The sessions were supplemented by two public lectures. The first, by Lewis W. Spitz, Jr., of Stanford University, dealt with "Luther the Man." The second, by George Forell of the University of Iowa, was entitled "Luther Now," and involved an appreciation of Luther's importance for our own time. All of these events were punctuated by dinners, receptions, and a performance of sixteenth-century music by St. Timothy's Recorder Consort.

Attendance was excellent, with over 140 registered guests from Canada, the United States, and Europe, and at least an equal number of laymen from the St. Louis and southern Illinois area who attended the lectures and some of the sessions on an informal basis. The event was widely reported in the national press.