

2. "LUTHERFEST" AT WHEATON COLLEGE

THOMAS O. KAY

Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, recognized the 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther in a "Lutherfest" throughout the fall term of 1983. The first major event was an "Academic Conference" held September 19-21 and featuring three addresses by Heiko Oberman of Tübingen University. Oberman's opening address called for a return to the sixteenth century to see Martin Luther in his own context and to accept him for who and what he was. Such an approach would gain for us a more complete and accurate understanding of Luther which would enhance his relevance for people today. This emphasis on method was refreshing and novel, and it served to support the information about Luther that was a part of the presentation. Oberman's second lecture, "Truth and Myth about Luther," sought to evaluate some twentieth-century characterizations about Luther which Oberman believes hide the true Luther from accurate contemporary understanding. Such a characterization is that of "der deutsche Luther." Oberman's concluding presentation was an interpretation of Luther's remarks regarding the Jews. It was essentially a summation of his recent publication on this theme, and built upon the methodology outlined in his previous two lectures.

Other highlights of the program included a thorough discussion of Luther's text, translation, and commentary on Galatians by Edwin Yamauchi of Miami University of Ohio. His extensive paper is a major contribution to this area of scholarship. A unique presentation was made by T. Thottumkal of St. Augustine's Seminary of Toronto, who argued that the doctrine of the priesthood of believers, while present in the church all along, was only recently brought to light in the Second Vatican Council.

The discussion of Lutheran views of the millennium by Robert Clouse of Indiana State University at Terre Haute, and the presentation of papers in the area of Luther's impact on literature and music by Leland Ryken and Daniel Limkeman, respectively, were very informative and well received. Also, the session on the family was of great interest. David Koss of Illinois College and Thomas Miller

of the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire presented discussions of Luther's views on family and marriage. Koss considered the significance of social mobility in the Luther family, while Miller developed Luther's concept of the home. A perceptive and well-balanced comment was given by Lenore Schneider, a young scholar in family history.

In addition to discussions regarding Luther and science, and Luther and Calvinists, there were papers which treated the Lutheran influence in later generations. Of special note was the paper of Duane Elbert of Eastern Illinois University on the American roots of German Lutherans in Illinois. This is part of a larger study on the development of Lutheranism in nineteenth-century America.

The sessions concluded with two fine papers which discussed the impact of Luther in modern Germany. Richard Pierard of Indiana State University at Terre Haute developed the theme, "The Lutheran Two Kingdoms' Doctrine and Subsistence to the State in Modern Germany," and Stephen Hoffman of Taylor University discussed "The Official View of Martin Luther in East Germany."

In addition to this Academic Conference, two other programs were developed to honor the contributions of Martin Luther. On Sunday, October 9, following nearly eighteen months of planning, Wheaton College and the Lutheran Churches of the area sponsored a festival worship service. For many of those who participated, this experience was the spiritual highlight of the entire Lutheran celebration. Nonliturgical evangelicals opened themselves to share in worship with the Lutheran community—an extremely enriching and rewarding experience for all. The President of Wheaton College, J. Richard Chase, welcomed the congregation. In the course of the liturgy, responses were given by officials of three Lutheran groups, all of whom participated in November in the joint Catholic-Lutheran service held at Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago. Richard Jensen, radio speaker for Lutheran Vespers, was the preacher, music was provided by the choirs of the Lutheran churches, and communion was served to all who were present.

The second additional special event was an open recital on October 11, presented by Warren Schmidt, Professor of Music at Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa. Notice of Luther's stress on the importance of music provided an opportunity for Schmidt to draw from a variety of sources, including his own compositions, to show how music does indeed enrich the Christian experience.

Copies of the programs may be obtained by writing to the History Department, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL 60187. Also, cassette tapes are available for all sessions and programs. Order forms may be requested from Wheaton College Recordings, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL 60187.

3. THE MARTIN LUTHER QUINCENTENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

VALENTINE C. HUBBS

The 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's birth was celebrated in Ann Arbor, Michigan, by the Martin Luther Quincentennial Conference of the University of Michigan, on September 26-29, 1983. This convention brought together scholars from various disciplines who could view the Reformer and his impact on Western civilization from different perspectives and in a variety of aspects. The conference co-chairmen were Gerhard Dunnhaupt and Valentine Charles Hubbs of the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures at the University of Michigan.

Even though the Conference itself did not officially begin until the morning of September 27, the opening address was delivered the previous evening by Hans Küng to an audience of more than two thousand. Küng, a Roman Catholic priest whose theological views have resulted in his censure by Rome, is a professor of ecumenical theology and the Director of the Institute for Ecumenical Research at the University of Tübingen. During the fall semester of 1983, he was a Visiting Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Michigan.

Küng has noted the disunity of Christianity as evidenced in the Catholic Church's refusal to abrogate its adherence to medieval theology and in the Protestants' rigid commitment to their particular brand of absolute dogma. He believes that only when the Christian world rejects legalism and pettiness, as Martin Luther did in the sixteenth century, can there be peace within the Church.

Valentine Charles Hubbs is Professor of German at the University of Michigan and was Co-chairman of the Martin Luther Quincentennial Conference of that University.