

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.

The scholarly conference itself began, as noted above, on September 27. There were two sessions each day for three days, concluded with a banquet on the evening of September 29. Attendance at the regular sessions numbered about three hundred. The general topics treated at these sessions, each of which had multiple papers, were "Luther the Man," "Luther the Humanist," "Luther the Reformer," "Luther in Modern Literature," "Luther and Contemporaries," and "Luther and His World."

The keynote address at the concluding banquet was given by Heiko A. Oberman of the University of Tübingen on "The Unecumenical Martin Luther." As was the case with the papers presented in the earlier sessions, Oberman sought to rediscover the historical Luther, attempting to separate the popular concept of the Reformer from the actual historical facts about him. In an account to appear in *Michigan Germanic Studies*, vol. 10, nos. 1 & 2 (1984), p. vi (forthcoming at the time of the present writing), the following summary of the high points in Oberman's lecture is given:

Speaking with a great deal of humor, he [Oberman] emphasized Luther's Catholic aspects. "Martin Luther was a Catholic, and not the first Protestant," he stated. Professor Oberman also placed emphasis on Luther's attitude toward the sensual in mankind and on Luther's belief in the devil. According to Oberman, Luther conceived of the conscience as the devil's domain. Thus he [the devil] only bothered with the people who were already children of God. He was a "sour spirit," who sought to negate the positive message of Christianity, which was one of joy and sensuality.

In addition to the lectures, the Conference provided other highlights: One of these was an English version of Niklaus Manuel's satirical play against Roman Catholicism, *The Pardon Peddler* (*Der Ablasskrämer*) of 1525, presented by the Harlotry Players (in four well-attended performances). The translation of this play into Chaucerian-flavored English was by Martin W. Walsh and his wife, Margarete Orlik-Walsh (Martin Walsh is head of the Residential College Drama Program at the University of Michigan). A second additional special feature was a concert of Luther's music for organ and voice, presented at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Ann Arbor, on the evening of September 27. Also, during the course of the convention, two films on Luther were shown, and one on Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who achieved fame for having become a Lutheran martyr during the Nazi regime in Germany.

Various displays and exhibitions on the University campus were available to the conference participants, as well. These included prints from the Reformation era (Museum of Art); rare books and pamphlets of the Reformation, plus an exhibit of publications by the Conference speakers (Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library); and a Luther exhibit from the German Democratic Republic (Rackham Art Gallery). (The William L. Clements Library participated, as well, by having a display that gave an overview of 300 years of history of "The German Americans.")

Various papers from the University of Michigan Martin Luther Quincentennial Conference are being published in the first 1984 number of *Michigan Germanic Studies*, and simultaneously in a hardcover edition by Wayne State University Press in Detroit, Michigan (orders for the volume should be sent directly to Wayne State University Press). This publication of the papers is made possible through a grant from the Max Kade Foundation.