The Third Sunday after the Epiphany
January 27, 1974
Rolling Meadows, Illinois

Rev. Carl F. Thrun

IN NOMINE JESU

St. Luke 4: 16 - 19: AND HE CAME TO NAZARETH, WHERE HE HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP; AND HE WENT TO THE SYNAGOGUE, AS HIS CUSTOM WAS ON THE SABBATH DAY. AND HE STOOD UP TO READ; AND THERE WAS GIVEN TO HIM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH. HE OPENED THE BOOK AND FOUND THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS WRITTEN, "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE HAS ANOINTED ME TO PREACH GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES AND RECOVERING OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET AT LIBERTY THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, TO PROCLAIM THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD."

Isaiah 61: 1, 2: THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD GOD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE THE LORD HAS ANOINTED ME TO BRING GOOD TIDINGS TO THE AFFLICTED; HE HAS SENT ME TO BIND UP THE BROKEN-HEARTED TO PROCLAIM LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES, AND THE OPENING OF THE PRISON TO THOSE WHO ARE BOUND; TO PROCLAIM THE YEAR OF THE LORD'S FAVOR.

It is with a HEAVY HEART that I step into this PULPIT TODAY. The EVENTS of this PAST WEEK make it VERY DIFFICULT to TRY to PROCLAIM with CONVICTION that THIS YEAR - 1974 - is also "THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD" - - - "THE YEAR OF THE LORD'S FAVOR."* HOW CAN THIS BE "THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD" - - - "THE YEAR OF THE LORD'S FAVOR" - - - - - when even the CHURCH has FALLEN PREY to POWER POLITICS - - - when PEOPLE who have DEVOTED their WHOLE LIVES to PREACHING and TEACHING the GOOD NEWS of JESUS CHRIST, "CRUCIFIED for our SINS and RAISED AGAIN for our JUSTIFICATION," are PUSHED AROUND like POLITICAL PAWNS in the POWER STRUCTURE of a CHURCH that has LOST its MISSION and MINISTRY? HOW can this be "THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD" - - - "THE YEAR OF THE LORD'S FAVOR" - - -

Facts & Statistics

when "BRIBES" and "DEALS" are OFFERED to the PRESIDENT of our SEMINARY to KEEP EVERYTHING "HUSH-HUSH" and "UNDERCOVER?"

I refer you to ROMAN NUMERAL ONE of the STATEMENT issued by Dr. John Tietjen, the PRESIDENT of CONCORDIA SEMINARY, St. Louis, as he gave it to the STUDENT BODY on the occasion of his SUSPENSION last SUNDAY NIGHT: "The Board of Control made its decision to suspend me after agents of the President of the Synod were unseccessful in efforts to arrange a deal which would have made suspension unnecessary. Persistent efforts to arrange a DEAL have been going on for the past TWO MONTHS. The terms proposed to me were as follows: if I would agree to ACCEPT a CALL, ARRANGEMENTS for which were being sought through FRIENDLY DISTRICT PRESIDENTS, NONE of the FACULTY members over 65 years of age would have to be RETIRED. Professor Paul Goetting would be RE-ENGAGED, a one-year MORATORIUM would be DECLARED on efforts to REMOVE FACULTY MEMBERS, and the CHARGES preferred AGAINST ME would NOT be PURSUED. I was informed that unless I AGREED to the proposal, MY SUSPENSION WAS INEVITABLE." If THAT is NOT IMMORAL, I DO NOT KNOW WHAT IS.

By this time ALL of YOU should have RECEIVED the COPY of MY LETTER to PRESIDENT HAPPEL,

the President of our NORTHERN ILLINOIS DISTRICT. That LETTER was NOT a SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT DECISION. It has been WEEKS and MONTHS and YEARS in COMING. I CANNOT in GOOD CONSCIOUS forever REMAIN a PART of a CHURCH BODY that has LOST its VERY PURPOSE for EXISTING: "TO PREACH GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR.....TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES AND RECOVERING SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET AT LIBERTY THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, TO PROCLAIM THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD!"

I am NOT asking YOU to AGREE with ME - - - - - I am ASKING YOU to have "THE COURAGE OF YOUR OWN CONVICTIONS!" In GOD'S NAME I tell you that there is NOTHING WORSE than a "FENCE-STRADDLER." There is NOTHING WORSE than someone that is NOT WILLING to STAND UP and CONFESS what HE BELIEVES. There is NOTHING MORE DAMNABLE, or DEMONIC, or DIABOLIC than INDIFFERENCE and APATHY! This is NOT just MY CHURCH or MY SYNOD or MY SEMINARY - - - it is YOURS TOO! Dr. Tietjen - the Seminary Faculty - the Students who have BOYCOTTED - - - - - THESE ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY! ..... If you do NOT want ME as YOUR PASTOR, then at least have the COURAGE to SAY SO! If I have been GUILTY of PREACHING or TEACHING HERESY or FALSE DOCTRINE, then STAND UP and SAY SO! But PLEASE don't pass it off by saying that PASTOR THRUN only gives us "ONE SIDE OF THE ISSUE." You have the RESPONSIBILITY and the OBLIGATION to FIND OUT for YOURSELF! What kind of a MAN would I BE if I did not STAND UP

for what I thought WAS RIGHT? What kind of a MAN would I BE if I tried to "PLAY IT SAFE" or "SIT ON THE FENCE?" Our Lord had a HARD WORD for those kind of PEOPLE: "I KNOW YOUR WORKS: YOU ARE NEITHER COLD nor HOT. WOULD THAT YOU WERE COLD OR HOT! SO, BECAUSE YOU ARE LUKE WARM, AND NEITHER COLD OR HOT, I WILL SPEW YOU OUT OF MY MOUTH."

This past week I have acquired a NEW APPRECIATION of the PROPHET ISAIAH. He SHINES like the SUN through the THICK CLOUDS! He has the very AUDACITY to say to people who are in TROUBLE: "I HAVE GOOD NEWS FOR YOU." The PEOPLE to whom he is speaking are in EXILE. They have been DRIVEN OUT of their HOMELAND - - AWAY from their TEMPLE that now lies in RUINS - - and he DARES to speak a "GOOD WORD" to THEM. They are in SLAVERY - - - they are CAPTIVES of the Babylonian empire - - - and now along comes this PROPHET and he says: "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD GOD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE THE LORD HAS ANOINTED ME TO BRING GOOD TIDINGS TO THE AFFLICTED; HE HAS SENT ME TO BIND UP THE BROKEN-HEARTED, TO PROCLAIM LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES, AND THE OPENING OF THE PRISON TO THOSE WHO ARE BOUND; TO PROCLAIM THE YEAR OF THE LORD'S FAVOR!" Somehow God always comes through with HOPE and PROMISE, and HIS OWN SURETY!

The PROPHET is ASKING them to LOOK BACK to the PROMISE given long ago to MOSES - - in Leviticus, chapter 25. Here it is that God TOLD Moses that every 50th year would be a "YEAR OF JUBILEE!" On the 1st day of that year a RAM'S HORN was SOUNDED. ALL the SLAVES were AUTOMATICALLY FREED - - - and the MORTGAGES and LEASES were CANCELED. Every POOR MAN could now GO BACK FREE to his FAMILY and HOME. The TRUMPET announced the GOOD NEWS - - - "A JUBILEE YEAR."

It must have sounded like WISHFUL THINKING - - or some IDIOT'S DREAM - - - - but still HERE was the HOPE of PROMISE. ..... When JESUS came to His HOME TOWN of NAZARETH, he entered the SYNAGOGUE and He read THAT TEXT. He said that the PROPHECY and the PROMISE of ISAIAH was now ~~COMPLETELY~~ FULFILLED. "TODAY THIS SCRIPTURE HAS BEEN FULFILLED IN YOUR HEARING!" He was, of course, referring to Himself! And do you know what the PEOPLE of HIS HOME TOWN DID? We are told in verse 29 of St. Luke chapter 4: "AND THEY ROSE UP AND PUT HIM OUT OF THE CITY, AND LED HIM TO THE BROW OF THE HILL ON WHICH THE CITY WAS BUILT, THAT THEY MIGHT THROW HIM DOWN HEADLONG!" They could NOT ACCEPT this home town BOY to be THEIR SAVIOR and THEIR LORD.

When I first came to this CONGREGATION, the very 1st SERMON that I PREACHED was on

St. Paul's words to the 1st Corinthians, His 1st letter - chapter 2, verses 1 and 2: "WHEN I CAME TO YOU, BRETHERN, I DID NOT COME PROCLAIMING TO YOU THE TESTIMONY OF GOD IN LOFTY WORDS OF WISDOM. FOR I DECIDED TO KNOW NOTHING AMONG YOU EXCEPT JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED." That is STILL MY PURPOSE. And even though it may mean MY BEING CRUCIFIED for MY LORD - - - - I can think of NOTHING BETTER. Amen!!!