

Bless We the Lord! Thanks be to God!

A Vivid Re-Collection  
Henry E. Horn

I appear before you to celebrate my Seventieth Anniversary of Ordination, and also the Centennial of Lutheran Campus Ministry. For one over ninety it has to be my recollection on the theme of my Call to My ordained ministry. I recall the eve of my ordination in St. John's Church in Albany, NY in 1936. Because of some appointments,<sup>1</sup> I had to meet with the Examining Committee just <sup>2</sup>the day before. They grilled me on two points: they expected to hear from me an account of some light from heaven come to me or some voiced converting me. I insisted that the call was "in my bones" and when they agreed among themselves that THAT was NO CALL, they found that my document of Call had been signed by the Seminary for teaching, and not the parish. They saw no reason to pass me. But they must have had a bad dream collectively, because the next morning they met me with an affirmation; they would "let me though but we'll never do it again." So I was a pretty mixed up fellow that day.

I was then a scholar in history, thoroughly involved in editing and publishing my grandfather's Memoirs<sup>3</sup>... eight generations as Lutherans in America, using the English language,<sup>4</sup> very unlike most others in the Synod. As my defense of my Call, I cited the two months when I was the caretaker of my Father,<sup>5</sup> pioneer campus minister, after the stroke that only a month later took his life at forty-eight years of age – conversing with him about campus ministry. At the time I was nineteen, and President of the Church Council, and oldest of the four kids that were left at home. Most of that time, my Father was upset about the collapse of the very work we now celebrate at Madison, Wisconsin – a united team work of residents and students which hit the terrible snag of depression financing and lost their church. He didn't want that to happen at Cornell after only eight years in our new building. Under those circumstances what does one think of BUT Jesus' words in the Temple at twelve years of age, in King James lingo, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" For me in the response was "in my bones"

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<sup>1</sup> My grandmother, Laura H. Jacobs, wife of Rev. Henry Eyster Jacobs, then widowed just four years and of course my Mother widowed the same years, BOTH had arrived expectantly. I never told them I had flunked!!!

<sup>2</sup> "in my bones" – My grandfather could tick off the names of about forty-eight living ministers in the Lutheran Church who were related at that time. The fact that Ed, Bill, Henry, and then Jim were ministers says something.

<sup>3</sup> See THE LIFE OF A CHURCHMAN, the Memoirs of Henry Eyster Jacobs – published about 1960.

<sup>4</sup> I have found recently a letter from my grandfather, Rev. Henry Eyster Jacobs, to his daughter, my mother, on four days after my birth. Here he gives thanks for my birth and being named after him, hoping that he would be faithful for posterity. He lists the eight generations in this country of Eysters and comments that this Ninth American Lutheran generation certainly should be able to CLAIM some recognition as Americans (this against the German hating public then.) See article by Fred Wentz in Gettysburg Seminary Ridge Bulletin, on Birthright American Lutherans.

<sup>5</sup> Father was stricken on Passion Sunday 1932 while leading worship. The stroke paralyzed him on one whole side. He managed to "come back" to sit on the porch with me for these conversations. He was very clear then and much is in my memory that was said there.

... my grandson at Harvard now majoring in Bio-Tech in his third year would probably say, "Grandpa, it would probably be in your NANO-GENES." But I'm certainly not THERE yet!

1907 is the original date we are celebrating for the Centennial of Lutheran Campus Ministry. My own story started in 1913 when I was popped out at birth. But from my historical studies it was just also in 1907 that my Father accepted the pastorate of the Lutheran Church of the Advent in New York City at 93<sup>rd</sup> and Broadway, the nearest Lutheran church to Columbia and Barnard. And very soon thereafter, he drew in those students to form an Industrial School on Saturdays at the church. We have evidence that my Father, through a special committee of Synod,<sup>6</sup> made contacts with Syracuse, Cornell, Dartmouth, Smith, Mount Holyoke, and Wellesley. I cannot yet find out when, but our "Eastern work with students"<sup>7</sup> may have been neck and neck with that of the mid-west at this date. In 1913 certainly, my Father received letters from both the Harvard and Cornell Clubs, urging the Synod to send them a Lutheran presence; and he sent two chaplains<sup>8</sup> (they were on leave from duty, and so the Synod could scrape the money). As the World War for America started in 1917, the then President Fry of the Synod (the father of Franklin Clark Fry) wrote my Father: "We are going to have a resident Pastor at Cornell. It was your idea. You will have to go. We can't pay you much salary (\$2,000) but if anyone will go it will be you." So in 1917, with the World War having commenced, the Horn family – 5 kids with whooping cough – completely outside quarantine restrictions – whooped their way in upper and lower berths for Ithaca, N.Y. That trip was my earliest memory. And it was immediately followed by a parsonage fire of considerable loss to us, a stern letter from the President of the University, denying the use of any on-campus space for Lutherans to gather<sup>9</sup> we found out later the fear of everyone of any of German background was behind it all. We found an old mansion, Cascadilla Manse, right at the gate of the campus and there set up our work. There from 1918 to 1925, my years from five to twelve, I was completely mixed with students and residents in a growing Association; and it continued with our move in 1925 to a new church building also right at the campus gate. In my college days at home, I served for several years as President of the Church Council – till I was 19. Enough of my call coming out of my bones. In Depression days then it is hard to

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<sup>6</sup> I think first Committee on Men for the Ministry, till about 1915, and then Committee on Student's Pastor (I think). Father insisted on keeping the Chair of this Committee for he essentially expected to go farther in this field in his own life, but he was cut down too soon.

<sup>7</sup> The quoted designation is what Rev. Donald Hetzler, Director of Campus Ministry said in a fine address at a celebration, I think in the Eighties.

<sup>8</sup> The Chaplains were first, Rev. Samuel Trexler, later the long-time President of the United Lutheran Synod of New York, and a regular visitor in our Family' and the Rev. Edwin Keever, also later a Pastor in Boston, and then spent his last years in North Carolina.

<sup>9</sup> My father started holding services in Barnes Hall, on campus – as sort of "Y" center for the various student workers. This action by the President and Deans took him by surprise. Directly after the armistice our neighbor across the street paid a call on Father and revealed that he had been assigned to track him all over as though he were a German spy! At that time, Central New York was very anti-German, and they didn't know what a Lutheran was. It was in the mid-twenties that a generous father of a student Father baptized gave us a fifty Watt radio station and we were able to broadcast our service through the air to the whole community and very soon were "our radio church." Cornell had to use our station for their musical broadcasts.

imagine how completely the idea of CAREERS could be wiped out. THAT implies that no one starts with a call, and then plans one step after another to a Career. Not then at all But my life unrolled in another direction.

Obviously, I wanted to finish my Father's work in the campus ministry. So after seminary teaching for two years, I was waiting for two possible calls; one the Assistant Pastor at my Father's native congregation in the South, old S. John's, Charleston (which never came), and the other to starting campus ministry in New York city (which never came). Instead I was, while waiting, Interim Pastor in a large congregation of young people in Northeast Philadelphia.<sup>10</sup> The President of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania maneuvered me into the leadership of the congregation – maneuvered is the word<sup>11</sup> -- but the needs of the congregation grabbed me. Six years were spent BEING SHAPED as a Pastor in the excessive demands of a Pastor in Depression times and early War years. I DID sneak over the State line to Princeton to gather Lutheran students there every fortnight for a total of \$25 for the year, expenses not included. How I was ever soft on the next call to Marion Junior College for women, I shall never know. My wife, Catherine, always said "I can understand your call to come to a man's college but to a women's NO! NEVER!" I guess it was in war time that we did crazy things! Our church had no other women's college but Marion, and I was immediately elected to the Board of Deaconess Work where we managed for twelve years to keep the call for women's rights before the church – especially the ordination of women – VOCAL. There I managed to develop a voice which then embarrassed me on many occasions.<sup>12</sup> But the demands of a grown family – there were six little kids then, and a mother-in-law to house – I accepted a call to a wonderful city church in Augusta, GA, assuming that I would have a long pastorate right there.

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<sup>10</sup> Immanuel Lutheran Church, Burholme, Philadelphia. This was just the time when in Depression, the knitting mills which surrounded our section, all moved South leaving an unemployed or poorly employed mass of workers. Our congregation was closely knit, and enveloped a distinct real estate development at one time; thus giving us a mass of people living in the SAME area, and Immanuel was THE non Catholic Church to go to. We had a wonderful ministry together.

<sup>11</sup> "maneuvered" – Without my knowledge, the President of the Synod called on our sick pastor and demanded his resignation; then recommended to the Church Council that they call ME. As soon as I heard about this I resigned my Interim status and retired to our family home in Ithaca. I was embarrassed as I was waiting for calls of places that were after me. Immanuel called me and what could I do but accept though they were about as far away from college fold as one could get. Our six years together were so wonderful that today I CANNOT IMAGINE HOW I left them – and with a hundred of our men in the Service. At Marion College I still kept in touch by mail with The Chatterbox monthly.

<sup>12</sup> I cannot recall nor do I have the physical ability to find out which Convention of the LCA I attended when they met, I think, in Kansas City about halfway through the sixties. I was a very vocal delegate and constantly popping up for this or that. When the Commission on Ministry, Charlie Cooper, Chair, came up it reported positively on our moving toward "studying" the ordination of women. Whatever was the exact motion, I can't remember, but suddenly there was a motion proposed by a dear life-friend, Bob Stackel, who everybody knew was the aged of President Franklin Clark Fry to scoop up controversial issues by referring it to the Executive Board. In this case it was in order to involve Missouri – that is all Lutherans together. I KNEW from my Deaconess Board experience that it was an executive ploy, and I rose immediately – but Dr. Fry, like an older brother, asked me to get control of myself. I did, and pushed hard fro the ordination of women SOON, that I had about a dozen at Harvard who were waiting for the church to make up its Mind. Well, it was a close vote but we won, and so the project took off till in a few years most everybody was for it. BUT at that very time something happened to my voice whenever I speak in a mike.

However, very shortly thereafter, just when was settling in, the United States Government by fiat took over two South Carolina counties across the River, moved out 25,000 residents, brought in the same number of workers, mostly from the mid-West and unionized; and then desegregated military centers, especially camp Gordon, nearby. My congregation with its reputation for good music, etc., was an easy target for those early test cases in integration. These were pre-Martin Luther King days... actually Rosa Parks days. I met Dr. King only when I came to Cambridge. Right then, as I was embroiled in vexing problems, the call came from Cambridge in two sections: first from President Frederick Knubel, a dear friend, of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England, and then from the departing pastor at Cambridge, Edmund Steimle, who actually grew up in the parsonage that the Horns had left in New York City. Both, knowing about my “in my bones” answer to my Examining Committee, just said “You are the only man we want.” That was my call unmistakable – either Yes or No.<sup>13</sup>

So right here [in Cambridge] is where we served for twenty five years until my retirement in 1978. And “UniLu is a sort of by-word for ‘the Eastern type of Lutheran Campus Ministry.’”<sup>14</sup> Centered in worship, preaching, pastoral work and a Lutheran presence in the ongoing conversation of university life. I now go back to my first discussion, as to whether, putting together all these turning points that are OBVIOUS IN MY OWN EXPERIENCE – which Schillebeeckx called “the searchlight effect”<sup>15</sup> I can see clearly a light going on in EACH of these turning points, shaping me for campus ministry in MY ADULT YEARS. And what a rich experience it has been!! Right now, with the help of a fellow retired minister,<sup>16</sup> a confirmand of mine years ago, we are now OVERWHELMED at the sheer amount of “stuff” for the Seminary archives. It all reminds me of an nonexistent text which as a child I used to imagine hearing when the disciples were gathering up “the fragments that remained” after the Feeding of the Five Thousand, ... they must have said “Holy Mackerel, what the heck are we going to do with all this food?” Overwhelmed by Grace!!! And it all makes sense in retrospect. Only my call came over and over again – in history – in the living life of the church, when someone in that church said, “ We want YOU, NOW!” Maybe more of us should say THAT to others when we see we need!!! It COULD be considered favorably by the Call Committee. I only hope I can be right here seven years from now to celebrate – really IN MY BONES, my own Centennial in 2013. 1913 to 2013. I promise I won’t address you then.

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<sup>13</sup> Ed Steimle called me long distance, “Henry, I want you to listen to the names of the Joes whom they are suggesting to SUCCEED ME!” He read them – and that was THAT. My Call was obvious.

<sup>14</sup> Taken from Don Hetzler. See above.

<sup>15</sup> I MUST RECOVER the work of Catholic theologian Schillebeeckx in his description of a piety of experience in which he uses the model of a hiker leading a bunch on a difficult trail at midnight, using a searchlight, and learning from flashing it here and there and tying it all together. I think I used it briefly in *The Christian in Modern Style*.

<sup>16</sup> Thanks to the Rev. Carl Ficken, retired Professor at the Southern Seminary has described the “Henry Horn Papers” which are now being used as a model for storing by the Archives. See the *Archive Advocate* of the Philadelphia Seminary this Spring, 2006.

I conclude by expressing my grateful thanks to a number of great companions who were so much a part of this celebration with me: Krister Stendahl, Connie Parvey, Paul Santmire, Art and Ronna von Au, Jack and Diane Stevens, Roger and Carol Johnson, Martin and Millie Gilman, Bob and Eleanor Halfman, Faith Bloomquist, Carl Bergquist, Warren and Ann Himmelberger, Ed and Gail Bucher.

We still maintain a lively Lutheran spirit in the Conversations of Perhaps the Greatest Intellectual Center in the World.

If that staggers you, relax because I want to close with a little Gilbert and Sullivan, clipped from the Pirates of Penzance.

In fact, in matters vegetable, animal and mineral.  
I am the very model of a modern CAMPUS MINISTER.

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