

ADDRESS, IMMANUEL EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

MANCHESTER

February 14, 1960

This is a momentous occasion in the history of this community, and I am grateful to your pastor for inviting me here to celebrate the 200th birthday of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church. For two centuries, this church has stood as guardian of the spiritual lives of the generations of men and women who have lived in Manchester and the surrounding area. At this milestone in its history, it is appropriate that we pause to contemplate the great contributions the church has made to the community and the State, and to pay homage to the courageous, God-fearing men who founded it and guided it on its long course of history.

Within recent months, some of the newspapers of the country published an exchange of letters between Adlai Stevenson and John Steinbeck, the novelist, in which these two great men discussed today's battle between the forces of good and evil. The ideas they expressed were both frightening and inspiring as the two men discussed what they regarded as a decline in the morality of the people and the possible effect it may have on the fate of our civilization. Mr. Steinbeck described it as "a creeping, all pervading, nerve-gas of immorality which starts in the nursery and does not stop before it reaches the highest offices, both corporate and governmental." He said he was troubled by "the cynical immorality of my country," and added that he did not believe the nation can survive on this basis unless "some kind of catastrophe strikes us." This was the frightening part of the picture he painted. The inspiring part came at the very end of the letter, where he said to Mr. Stevenson:

"Maybe nothing can be done about it, but I am stupid enough and naively hopeful enough to want to try. How about you?"

The evil of the age in which we live, we read and hear almost every day, is its uncertainty and its instability. We seem to have moved too far away from the fundamental concepts of right and wrong adhered to by the followers of Martin Luther who founded and nurtured this church

Maybe we need more of the fundamental religion that was possessed by the men who founded this church. Maybe a little fire and brim-