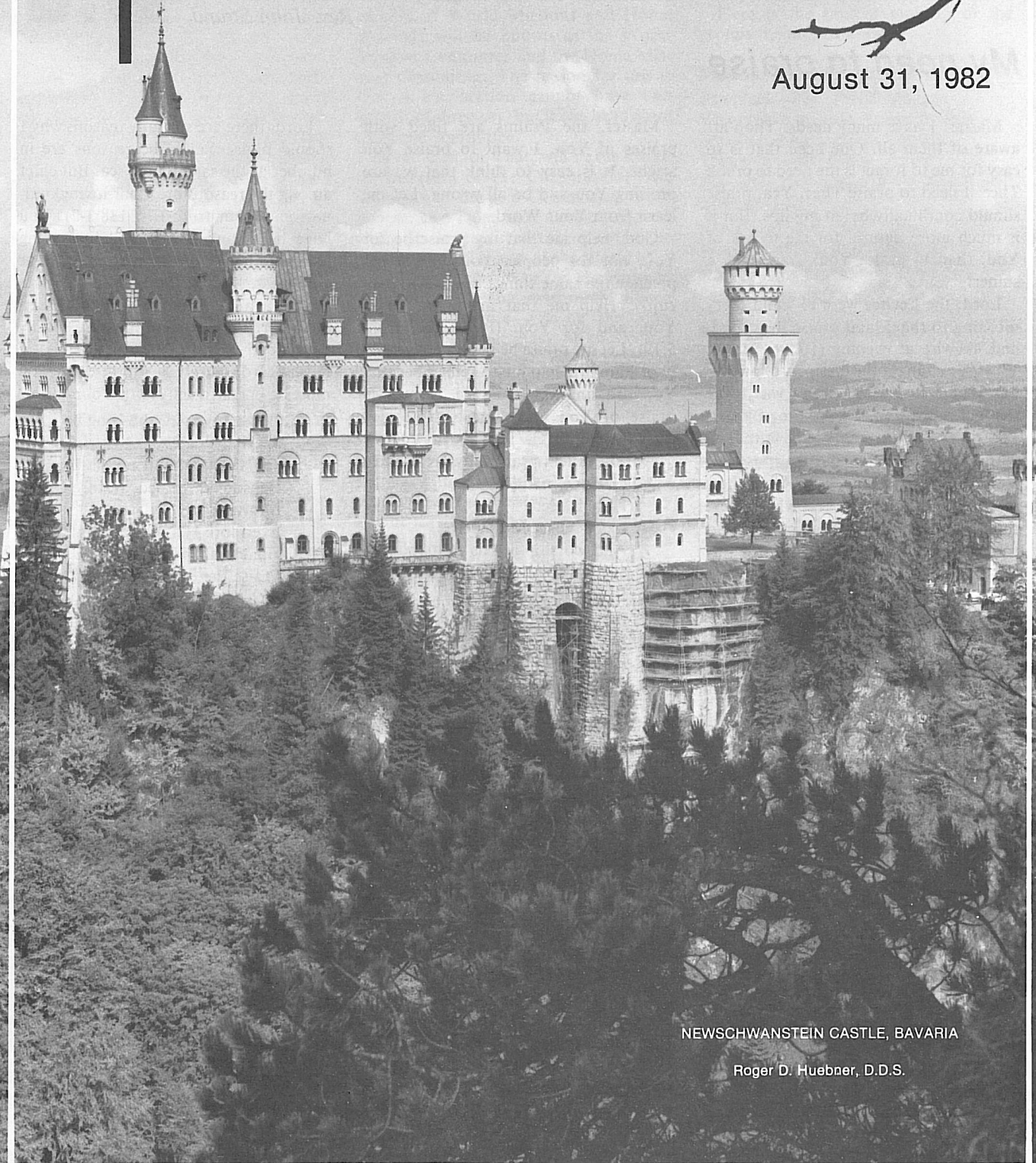


THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

August 31, 1982



NEUSCHWANSTEIN CASTLE, BAVARIA

Roger D. Huebner, D.D.S.

AT THE MASTER'S FEET



Rev. John Strand

My need to praise

Master, I have many needs. Thou art aware of them all. One need that is so easy for me to forget is the need to praise Thee. I need to praise Thee. Yea, praise should continually be on my lips. But it is much more natural for me to ask of You, than to praise You! I am such a sinner.

Lord, the Levites were to stand every morning to thank and praise their God, and likewise at evening (I Chr. 23:30). When You taught the disciples to pray to our Heavenly Father, praise was to be the first expression. Yes, praise of You is one of the telling marks of faith and witness, one of the chief purposes of Your children (I Pet. 2:9). Alas, there are times we complain and whine more than praise. Lord, have mercy! Help us to praise You!

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

is published biweekly (except the second issue in August) by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55441.

All communications concerning contents of this magazine should be addressed to: Rev. Raynard Huglen, Editor, Newfolden, Minn. 56738.

Layout design: Mrs. Wayne Hjermstad. Editorial Board: Mr. Sheldon Mortrud, Rev. Francis Monseth, Rev. Robert Lee.

The subscription price is \$10.00 per year (24 issues) and should be sent to THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55441. Second-class postage paid at Minneapolis, Minn.

Volume 20 Number 16/7
USPS 588-620

Master, the Psalms are filled with praises of You. I want to praise You aright. It is easy to think that we are praising You and be all wrong. Let me learn from Your Word.

God, help me that my praise be for You, not for people. You do not appreciate the same things that fallen men enjoy. Help me that my praise be to You, and for You. (Ps. 71:22, Eph. 5:19). Let my praise be godly, not worldly or human. Help me to remember that You are unique. You are Holy. My praise of You must not be patterned after the world (Ps. 96:6).

"Let them praise Thy great and awesome name;
Holy is He."

Exalt the Lord our God,
And worship at His footstool;
Holy is He.

Exalt the Lord our God,
And worship at His holy hill;
For Holy is the Lord our God"
(Ps. 99:3, 5, 9).

Lord, may my praise reflect Your holiness, Your uniqueness. Help me to really praise You and not be praising my praise or the praise of others.

Master, it is easy for things to become common, ordinary and lose their meaning. Lord, good things can become just form for me. Help me that my heart be always filled with more praise than my lips speak or sing.

"I will give thanks to Thee, O
Lord my God, with all my heart,
And will glorify Thy name
forever" (Ps. 96:12).

Lord, You hate hypocrisy. This was the sin You seemed most offended by when You were on earth in the flesh. Help me to praise You in a most genuine way, lest my "praising" be only another sin.

Lord, there are so many reasons why I should praise You. The reasons are in number as the sand by the sea. But chief among the reasons are Your lovingkindness and Your truth (Ps. 138:1-2). You have been, and always will be, loving and kind. This is part of Your Godliness. Your Word is Truth. It gives me faith and strength. You have given me Your Word beyond measure. Many have never heard. I praise You that I have heard. Surely my praise of You must be in conformity with Your Word!

Praise my soul, the King of
heaven,
To His feet thy tribute bring;
Ransomed, healed, restored,
forgiven,
Evermore His praises sing!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Praise the everlasting King.

Praise Him for His grace and
favor

To our fathers in distress;
Praise Him, still the same as
ever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless;
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Glorious in His faithfulness.

Fatherlike, He tends and spares
us;
Well our feeble frame He knows;
In His hands He gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes;
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Widely as His mercy goes.

Angels in the height, adore Him;
Ye behold Him face to face;
Saints triumphant, bow before
Him;
Gathered in from every race.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Praise with us the God of grace.



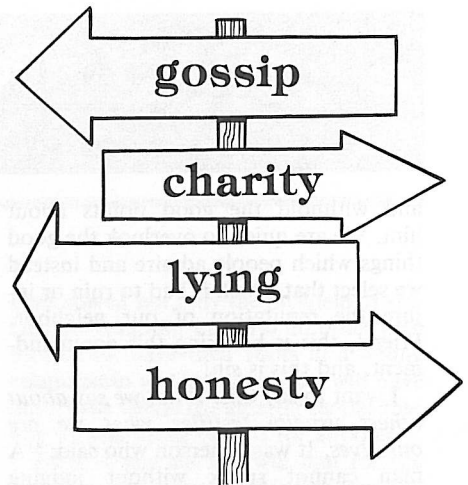
*Abridged from a message by
Pastor Herbert Franz, Cloquet, Minn.*

It has been said that of all the commandments, we break this commandment the most: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." God forbids us to injure the good name and reputation of our neighbor through lying about him, slandering him or betraying his confidence. One of the sins in the end times (just prior to the Lord's return) is this sin of lying. Paul said in II Timothy 3:1-4 that the sins of "truce-breaking and false accusers" will come to the forefront more and more.

We need a revival of honesty in America today. Thomas Huxley said: "Truth is the heart of morality." Emerson said: "Every violation of truth is a stab at the health of the human society."

Henry Luce said: "The most dangerous fault in American life today is the lack of interest in truth." Did you know that American lie over one-billion-dollars' worth each year? The government collects a billion dollars yearly from people who have not filed a truthful income tax return. *The good life of a community has truth at its center.* We are all witnesses to the Truth whether we be in court or out of court. We are witnesses every day because we are involved with other people's lives. We affect our neighbor's life every day by what we say about him. Can't you see how important it is to tell the truth at all times? What would happen to our cities if we could trust no one's word and if men lied every time they wanted to?

God says: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." What does this commandment really mean? *Speaking falsely* about anyone will limit that person's life in one way or another. No one can live well after his reputation has been ruined by a false statement against him. Many times half-truths pre-



vent a person from living a full and complete life. Anytime we share only half a truth about a person and leave the rest of the truth hanging in the balance, we are sinning against that person because we are injuring his reputation. Samuel Butler said: "The best liar is he who makes the smallest amount of lying go the longest way." Alfred Tennyson said: "A lie which is half a truth is ever blackest of lies. A lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright, but a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight." Henry Hiatt said: "It is perfectly possible to tell a lie without saying anything untrue. Just simply tell a piece of truth and refuse to tell all of it." Let me cite an example: A man gave a false address when he registered for voting. When he was caught, he was asked why he had lied. He then answered, "They didn't ask me at the registration booth where I lived. They only asked me for an address and I gave them any address."

Peter Howard tells the story of a countryman who had a conscience which bothered him. At last he went to a farmer and said: "Sir, I'm sorry. I stole a rope from you a while back." The farmer forgave him and so the man went away, but still the man had no peace of mind because he had not confessed the whole story. He only told a half-truth, because on the end of the rope was the farmers' cow which he had stolen. None of us would go into our neighbor's house and inject him with a shot of virus to ruin his health. That would be a monstrous thing to do. Yet the same thing happens whenever a half-truth is told about our neighbor. We are crippling his reputation. It can occur so naturally and so innocently to tell a half-truth. Someone may ask our opinion about our neighbor, and what do we do? We select some weak point about him (something negative but which is true)

◇

THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS

Exodus 20:16



"Gossip is the worst pollution a community can suffer."

and withhold the good points about him. We are quick to overlook the good things which people admire and instead we select that which is bad to ruin or injure the reputation of our neighbor. Friend, this is breaking this commandment, and this is sin!

I want to say this: *What we say about others usually testifies what we are ourselves.* It was Emerson who said: "A man cannot speak without judging himself." Richter put it this way: "Never does a man portray his own character more vividly than in his manner of portraying others." Our half-truths, our lies and our false witness about others will hurt *us* as much as the one spoken about.

False impressions also can injure the reputation of our neighbor. Take the case of the sailor who wrote in the log book: "The captain was sober today." What immediately comes to your mind? We would think that the captain must be drinking other days. What this sailor wrote was true because the captain was sober that day, but he was sober *every* day because he never drank. But in writing this statement, this sailor gave the false impression that the captain was a drunkard, which he was not. Is this what you do in your relationship with your neighbor? Do you give false impressions about him?

Take this example: if someone asks you about Mr. Jones and you answer, "Well, the least said about him, the better," right away there is a doubt placed in the mind of the person you are talking to, that Mr. Jones must be some kind of "nut" when he really isn't. You gave that person the wrong impression about Mr. Jones. You have ruined the reputation of Mr. Jones by your statement, and this is sin. *Any impression made contrary to plain truth is a lie.* This can be expressed by a raised eyebrow when someone speaks about your neighbor, or the shrugging of your shoulder, putting your tongue out, or any kind of gesture or voice inflection or emphasis on the wrong things or words of your neighbor.

God hates gossip and backbiting with holy hatred. Gossip is usually spreading tales about another person which are not true. Gossip is the worst pollution which a community can suffer. I believe there are many communities which are badly suffering from this affliction. Gossiping is an age-old sin because it condemns

without requiring evidence and sometimes without even wanting it. Those who spread gossip are hungry for the false ego of "putting down" someone or anyone else in the hope, perhaps, of somehow elevating themselves instead. Gossip is social pressure gone wrong, and it is cruel.

Tragically, most gossip involves private lives, and these vicious stories may never be verified because many times the subject matter is too embarrassing to ask about directly. The insidious thing about the grapevine is that, no matter how many good things it could carry, the bad things are usually the ones that can be magnified all out of proportion. The gossip may be a supposition, then it goes to suspicions, then to allegations, to assertions, and finally the gossip has gone through so many hands that what is said is the "gospel truth."

Many times the gossipier does not recognize the evil he is doing to his neighbor or fellowman. He doesn't realize the lives he is ruining and many of these lives may never be the same again. We read in Leviticus 19:16: "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people." "And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not" (1 Timothy 5:13). *Gossip spreads like a prairie fire.* Everyone adds fuel to the fire. Adding a little more and a little more leads to a blazing inferno which ruins all lives in its path.

What does God command us? He says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." In other words, *don't gossip!* Don't bear tales about another person which you don't know are true or not. Bearing false witness against our neighbor is actually telling a lie. Lying comes naturally, for we were born liars. The seed of lying is in our heart. Jeremiah said: "The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked." "They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies" (Psalm 58:3). Paul speaks about people whose tongues are loaded with lies. Everything they say has in it the *sting* and poison of deadly snakes. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness" (Romans 3:9-15). We know that the father of all liars is the devil himself (John 8:44). The only one

who never lied—Jesus Christ—was killed by liars!

Why do people lie anyway? Some lie to *save face*. A person is accused of some wrongdoing and he is embarrassed because he is caught in a trap. In order to get out of it and save face, he will deliberately tell a lie. Many children lie to escape punishment. Some people lie for *profit*. A fellow sells a car and he lies about the number of miles on it in order to get a larger selling price. Some people lie for *revenge*. Someone may be jealous or envious of another person's good fortune, so because he feels shunned, he lies in order to damage the person he is jealous of. Then think of the lies in the *advertising* field today. Many companies lie about their products. They may think that the average American is stupid, but not everyone is. There is also lying between nations through deceptive claims and unnegotiable promises. Companies lie through many crooked contracts with their public. Many people also live a lie each day by pretending to be something which they really aren't. This reaches right into our religious life, and we call it *hypocrisy*. The situation is like Hallowe'en in reverse, with every form of evil intent wearing a gracious and smiling mask. Other ways of breaking this Commandment include evil speech, judging wrongly, or giving a false recommendation as a reference for a person who does not deserve it.

The greatness of this sin of false witnessing is revealed in the fact that this sin is contrary to the nature of God, for *God is truth*. Hebrews 6:18 tells us that it is impossible for God to tell a lie. If we want to please God, then we need to speak the truth in love. God hates the sin of false witnessing. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but they that deal truly are His delight" (Proverbs 12:22). Proverbs 6:16-19 tells us the seven things which God hates, and right in the midst of this list is included "a proud look, a lying tongue, and a false witness that speaketh lies."

One thing is certain: no sin in the whole category of evil has a greater antiquity and clearer original source than that of lying. Satan, who is the father of all liars, lied to our first parents in the Garden of Eden. God had told Adam and Eve that they were not to touch the

[Continued on page 7]

CHRISTIAN FAITH and SPIRITUAL LIFE

When the Philippian jailer asked the Apostle Paul and his partner Silas, saying "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" they answered:

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31).

When we read the account of this incident which is recorded in the sixteenth chapter of Acts we are impressed and delighted by the jailer's conversion and by the way it came about. Perhaps, however, we are inclined to hesitate a little at the apostle's admonition and wonder if that is all that is required of us to be saved. Perhaps there are those who feel that just believing in Christ allows for indifference as far as obedience to His will is concerned, therefore they feel that something more than faith is needed if they are to enjoy the favor of God and have the promise of salvation and eternal life. Recognizing the possibility of this type of thinking, perhaps a careful analysis of the apostle's statement would be in order. It is possible that some of us do not appreciate the full significance of what it means to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps we have too limited a concept of what that involves. Jesus Himself said:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47).

It is the purpose of this article to try to shed some light on this very important subject so that we may have a better understanding of what it means to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thus have a better understanding of why faith in Him will result in life.

Among the various Scripture passages which have a bearing on Christian faith, a brief statement spoken by our Lord is

significant and enlightening. It tells us much about what it means to believe in Him. In the twelfth chapter of the Gospel of John, we read these words:

"Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on him that sent Me. And he that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me" (John 12:44-45).

We see Jesus Christ as he is revealed to us in holy Scripture, especially in the four Gospel accounts of His life. As the only begotten Son of God, the inherent nature and character of Christ is identical with that of God the Father. It is basic to our understanding of Christian faith that we recognize Jesus Christ as a personal revelation of God, as God manifested in the flesh. In Him we see manifested the holiness and the righteousness of God as well as the love and the mercy of God. In Him the nature and character of God are revealed to us. To see Christ is to see God. Jesus said: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

It is important that we have these truths in mind when we think in terms of believing in Christ, and recognizing these truths we will have a better understanding of what it means to believe in Him. The fact that believing in Christ amounts to believing in God the Father makes it clear that one who truly believes in Christ believes in those characteristics and attributes which are inherent in the nature and character of Christ, which characteristics and attributes He possesses in common with God the Father. Thus one who believes in Christ believes in righteousness and truth as he sees them revealed in Christ. He believes in everything which Christ taught by word and example and disapproves of that which he recognizes as contrary to the nature and character of Christ and thus of God the Father. To the extent that he knows Christ the believer will be in spiritual accord with Christ.

Thus it is evident that indifference to sin is entirely inconsistent with Christian faith, and if we disapprove of that which is contrary to the nature and character of Christ, then it is evident that we will see much in our own life that we will disapprove of. A knowledge of Christ will cause us to be acutely conscious of our inherent sinful nature. ◇

CONSTANTLY RENEWED

*For the minister
the supreme
qualification
is a certain
quality of spiritual
being which is
the gift of God
alone. He
must in every
aspect of his life
and work give
unmistakable
evidence
that he has a
constantly
renewing
experience
of God.*

Raymond Calkins

The thrill of living decently

Proverbs 10:23

"Wise conduct is pleasure to a man of understanding." R.S.V.

"But a man of understanding hath wisdom." K.J.V.

In the smoking room of a Pullman a bibulous individual was pressing his liquor upon a fellow passenger.

"No, I don't drink, thank you," the man said with quiet dignity.

"Didn't you ever drink?" the half-drunk inquired incredulously.

"No, I never did," the quiet man replied.

"Boy, you've missed a lot!" And the drinker laughed hilariously at his own joke, as half-drunks do.

"Yes, I have," the other answered, "and I am pretty well-satisfied with having missed it, too. You see, I have never come home to my children intoxicated to the point that they were afraid of me. I have never lost a job because I was unable to get back to work on Monday morning after a Sunday drinking spree. I have never embarrassed my wife or my friends with maudlin conversation while 'under the influence.' I have never imposed upon any stranger to get me home

"Sin is a disease of the soul, and no disease has ever produced the thrill of normal living."



at night because I was unable to find my own way. I have never jeopardized the lives of other drivers on the highway because there was alcohol in my blood stream. I have never been refused life insurance because of my drinking habits. I have never made a spectacle of myself in public because of my drugged condition. I guess you are right! Boy, I have missed a lot."

In all too many instances the upright have apologized for their uprightness; the sober have excused their sobriety; the decent have tried to appear mildly indecent in order to escape attention.

Just as obedience to the laws which govern in the chemist's laboratory can be depended upon to produce desirable results, so obedience to the laws of morality and decency can be depended upon to produce a thrilling life.

There is no thrill like that of good health, a clean conscience, and a sense of well-doing. Sin is a disease of the soul, and no disease has ever produced the thrill of normal living.

—*New Light from Old Lamps*
by Roy L. Smith

Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tenn.

FAITH and LIFE. . .

But Christ revealed not only the holiness and the righteousness of God. He also revealed the love and mercy of God. He revealed the glorious truth that:

"God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

So when we see Christ we see Him not only as the holy and righteous one but we see Him also as our Savior and Redeemer, as the one through whom penitent sinners may have the forgiveness of sin and the gift of life eternal.

At this point, perhaps we should give some further thought to the subject of eternal life. As the term is used in holy Scripture it has reference, not just to everlasting existence, but to that God-given spiritual life which comes to the one who truly believes in Jesus Christ. We will consider some portions of holy Scripture which tend to lead us into an understanding of this truth.

Once when speaking about His death on the cross which was soon to be accomplished, Jesus said;

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" (John 12:32).

The love of God revealed at the cross is doubtlessly the greatest factor in drawing people, in creating a willingness and desire in the hearts of people to come to Christ, and we note that Christ wants to draw us unto Himself. Forgiveness which he won for us when He allowed Himself to be put to death on the cross opens the door to fellowship and communion with Christ. Forgiveness of sin opens the door to spiritual union with Christ. Once when talking to His disciples, Christ said;

"If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

These words remind us that believing in Christ is a matter of the heart as well as the intellect and true faith in Christ will result in spiritual union with Christ.

Those of us who have some knowledge of holy Scripture are well acquainted with God's love and willingness to

receive the penitent sinner. The question that confronts us is, are we willing to repent? Are we willing to live in fellowship with Christ and be obedient to His will? Christ wants to share His life with us. Are we willing to receive Him? To have Him come and make his abode in us?

"As many as received Him, to them have He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12).

In his conversation with Nicodemus, Christ said, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). These words, as we know, have reference to spiritual birth, spiritual life. To be spiritually united with Christ is to experience the transforming and regenerating power of God. To be spiritually united with Christ is to have life eternal.

"This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:11-12).

—a tract by
Merrill Ogarden,
Bethel Lutheran Church
Minot, N. Dak.

FALSE WITNESS. . .

tree of the knowledge of good and evil because if they did, they would die (Genesis 2:17). The devil came to Eve and first made her doubt God's words by saying to her, "Did God say you should not eat of any tree in the garden?" Then the devil lied to Eve and said, "You shall not die. God knows that if you eat of that tree, you will be like God and know good and evil." Eve believed his lie and ever since that time man has been prone to lie. We are born liars.

The test of true religion is the control of the tongue, because the tongue is so prone to speak lies, to gossip and to hurl angry words at others. Now if we believe that controlling the tongue seems too high a standard to live up to, then all we need to do is to study the life of Job whom God called a perfect man, that feareth God and turneth away from evil (Job 1:8). Under the utmost testing, and stripped of all his wealth and of his children, the Bible says this of Job: "In all this, did not Job sin with his lips" (Job 1:10).

How can this be possible? It is possible only through Jesus Christ. Jesus said, I am the Truth (John 14:6). Therefore if Christ is truth, then we need His power and His life within us in order to speak truth. When one has the mind of Christ, such a person can adhere to the truth and speak it without offense. What we need to do is to *confess* our sins of lying, gossiping, slander, backbiting and false witnessing. Let us be honest with every sin which the Holy Spirit reveals to us. We must lay them all at the cross of Calvary and allow the blood of Jesus to wash these sins away. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

It is God's command that we do not bear false witness to others. God hates this sin and He will deal with it one day at the Great White Throne Judgment if this sin is not confessed and placed under the blood of Jesus.

Instead of bearing false witness against our neighbor, we should endeavor to help him and assist him whenever possible. Try to lift him up if he has sinned by encouraging him and praying for him. We should use our tongues to bless and praise God as well as to speak well of our neighbor. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, let us bridle our tongues and use them to glorify God. What could be better than "speaking forth the good news of salvation?" If we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, then we have a message to tell to

The words that fell from his lips were a true prayer, a true confession of sin: "God, be thou merciful to me a sinner." "God"—he was aware of His awful presence. "Sinner"—none greater than he could be found. "Be thou merciful"—nothing but God's mercy could avail him now. Excuses and explanations he had none to make. Pity, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, for these his soul yearned, and for these his heart and lips pleaded in utter abasement and soul anguish.

F. Hammarsten

THE PUBLICAN'S PRAYER

"Instead of bearing false witness against our neighbor, we should endeavor to help him and assist him whenever possible."

people lost in sin. We can tell them that God loves them, that Jesus died for them, and that through Him, we can have forgiveness of sins and eternal life by receiving Him as our Savior and Lord.

Also under the influence of the Holy Spirit, our tongues can offer comfort to the afflicted and sorrowing. God comforteth us in all our affliction that we may be able to comfort others in their affliction with the same comfort which we have received from God (II Corinthians 1:4). Isn't it wonderful to be able to use our tongues for something meaningful and helpful instead of destroying people's reputations and lives by untrue and unverified stories? We can use our tongues to inspire people who are troubled and discouraged. *It takes much*

longer to build up a person than to tear him down. It takes several months to build a house but only a day or two to tear it down, and likewise with people.

Have you broken this Commandment? Why not come today and claim the victory that can be yours in Jesus Christ? Confess as Isaiah did: "I am a man of unclean lips" and ask God for His power to control your tongue. *If you have problems with your tongue, it means that there is something wrong with your heart.* When we give our hearts and lives to Him, our members also go along with our hearts. Give your life to God today and ask Him to use your mouth for His glory, that you might be an encourager and not a destroyer.

CALLED HOME

*The pearly gates have opened
The saints have entered in –
One by one the Savior called them
Whose hearts were cleansed from sin.*

*The heavenly host gave welcome
To each one as she came;
The servants of the Master
Who bowed at Jesus' name.*

*A mother of a family –
Grandma loved by all,
Fathers, too, were taken,
Young and old the Lord did call.*

*All who loved and served Him,
Taken to their home above,
Bring sorrow, yes, but joy –
To know they're with the One they love.*

*Some we see from 'cross the ocean,
Ones we prayed for day by day,
That God's Word would reach them
And lead them in His way.*

*Some our Mexican neighbors
From our own mission field,
The small and great among them
Their lives to Him did yield.*

*From South America and India,
At home with their Lord,
Are there because a messenger
Brought them God's Holy Word.*

*America, yes, the bountiful land
From north, east, south and west,
Who've lived and loved and served Him
And given Him their best.*

*My friends, are you ready to meet our
Savior, too,
If He should come and take you
To His home "beyond the blue?"*

*Now is the time to take Him
Into your heart and life!
Accept Him now and serve Him
In this world of strife.*

*Then pray for others 'round you
And bring them into the fold,
That all may go to heaven
And walk the streets of gold!*

**Mrs. Ernest Langness
Faith, S. Dak.**

The poem was used by Mrs. Langness in her presentation at the WMF memorial service in Dickinson, N. Dak., in June.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The North Central District WMF Rally will be Saturday, October 16, at Lanstad Free Lutheran Church, Shelvin, MN., Pastor and Mrs. Leslie Galland, Thief River Falls, will be the speakers.

LADIES WE ARE INTERESTED IN YOU!

Send news items; clear, close-up photos; announcements; program ideas; poetry; testimonies; articles; etc. to Mrs. Wayne Hjermstad, 16980 Duck Lake Tr., Eden Prairie, MN 55344.

editorials

FIND A CHURCH

In a devotional in his book *The Word for Every Day*, Alvin Rogness writes about the stresses and temptations for the modern family. One of the stresses is the mobility of families today. There is more rootlessness than in our parents' and grandparents' day.

Dr. Rogness cites one man who has a good practice for helping to combat his own rootlessness, subject as he is to transfers in his work. The man told him that when he and his family get to a new community the first thing they do is find a church home so that they will have a support group in this "uneasy and mobile age."

That certainly is the right attitude to have. It is putting first things first. Many people don't have that as a priority in their lives. They move to new places and take their own sweet time about getting involved in a church, if they ever do. We've all heard the old saying about people leaving their religion back East when they have moved to the West Coast. It's a generalization, of course, but it has happened all too often.

What emptiness in life when there is no concern for spiritual things. How much people miss when they don't have the support group of a Christian congregation in their lives. They go it alone and that is a lonely road even though life may be filled to the brim with activity and there are few quiet moments for reflection. Yes, these "practical atheists" are like the atheist who has no "invisible means of support."

We aren't suggesting that belonging to a church means everything. There must be personal faith in the Lord Jesus. But a Christian will want to be a part of a local church if at all possible, where he may hear God's Word being preached, may partake of the Sacrament, can find fellowship and participate in the work of witness and service to the world.

Since many people don't do as the family mentioned above, seek out a church home immediately in a new community, it is up to the churches to make contact. How poorly we usually live up to that challenge. We think we may know who lives where and what their church preferences are, but if an actual canvass is made of the area, it is usually revealed that there were many misconceptions and much ignorance of the existing situation. It is found out that many people have fallen through the cracks of the good intentions of a congregation. In other words, they just weren't being reached by anyone.

This can even happen in thinly populated rural areas and in small towns. It certainly happens in cities of every size. In the rural area it is easy to pinpoint where people live and the congregation's natural territory, and hence primary responsibility. In the city it is much different. The church building is located at such and such a corner; the city is spread out and has thousands of people. What is the congregation's responsibility? It is obviously not going to do much in a neighborhood some miles away. But it certainly is responsible for that which is near at hand. And so the effort must be made to reach out, to at least talk some time to the families which live in the same block as the church, in the block across the street and the blocks in the immediate area. Let's not let anyone near by slip through the cracks as far as being approached on behalf of

Christ, at least. Outreach beyond will depend on the zeal and dedication of pastor and congregation.

The same type of approach must be used in rural areas and small towns. Work out from the center to the sections at hand and the blocks nearest the church.

Few of us would probably feel like boasting about our reaching out to those folks who don't come looking for a church home. There may be a lot left to be desired in this effort. But at least we can make new attempts. There are various evangelism programs in operation in which the Gospel is brought to persons who have made some approach to the church, i.e., have attended a service, have a child in Sunday School, etc. Our appeal today is that we contact people, too, who haven't even done that much, and that we tell them that we know they are there and that our congregation is here to be of help to them.

And may our churches be ones which will be attractive to them, communities of caring and loving, friendly, showing the love of Jesus Christ to all who come through the doors.

And should you find yourself moving to a new home, out of your present community, we hope you will seek a new church home as the very first thing you do. Seek out an evangelical Lutheran church. Possibly it will be your good fortune to find an Association congregation in which to fellowship.

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ASSOCIATION OF FREE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS 3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

BUDGET RECEIPTS February 1-June 30

| Fund | Total Budget | Total Rec'd to Date | % of Total (Ideal—42%) |
|----------------|--------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| General Fund | \$170,000.00 | \$ 49,260.77 | 29 |
| Schools | | | |
| AFLTS | 86,381.00 | 25,861.30 | 30 |
| AFLBS | 154,162.00 | 36,398.00 | 24 |
| Home Missions | 254,380.00 | 52,071.91 | 20 |
| World Missions | 218,880.00 | 65,640.58 | 30 |
| Praise Fund | 30,200.00 | 11,482.81 | 38 |
| Total | \$914,003.00 | 240,715.37 | 26 |
| 1981-82 | \$809,206.00 | \$228,239.52 | 28 |

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YOUTH

Re-election from Galilee Bible Camp

"I Will Praise The Lord" was the theme for the Teen Camp, taken from Psalm 34. We heard in the evening services and the Bible class of the right attitudes we must have in Christ. Some of the attitudes were names like Glorify, Rejoice, Honor. We saw Cain and Abel and their attitudes towards Christ. Cain's offering was rejected because he did not put his full heart into it and did not give his best. Abel's gift was accepted as Abel gave his gift with a sincere heart. Therefore the Lord blessed him greatly. Are we giving our best to Christ?

There were many blessings at camp this year. I had the opportunity to be one of the counselors. It was a joy to share with the kids and to see their attentiveness to the Word.

Janeen Galland

Camp has always meant a lot to me and each time I go it puts me on a spiritual high. I feel so close to God and I can really see the Holy Spirit at work.

The sermons this year were centered on very good subjects such as dating and peer pressure which I think are two big problems for teenagers.

I know that not all the kids who were at camp were Christians, but I also know that by the end of the week the number of Christians had increased, and I praise God for it.

Shannon Olson

—July Newsletter,
Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
Thief River Falls, Minn.

Eastern N. Dakota youth camp held

A youth Bible camp for the Eastern North Dakota District was held at Red Willow Lutheran Bible Camp, Binford, July 18-23. About 45 youth attended. Rev. Francis Monseth, dean of Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary, was the Bible teacher and evening speaker.

Meals and recreation time were shared with approximately 90 young people attending an American Lutheran Church camp the same week at Red Willow.

What's going on. . .

From Spicer, Minn.

The summer has been a busy one for the youth at Green Lake congregation near Spicer, Minnesota. In June they sponsored their second annual Bike-a-thon by biking around Green Lake. This involves at least a 12-mile trip and about 15 from the church. Funds were raised for Bible Camp by riding. Barnabas V traveled with the youth this year. Money raised went to help youth go to Faith Haven Youth Lodge.

Bible Camp at Faith Haven Youth Lodge was the biggest event of the summer. Almost every youth from the congregation took advantage of the opportunity by boarding Student Pastor Frank Cherney's bus and going to camp. Good messages were heard from Pastor Kenneth Pennti each evening and from Green Lake's Pastor Gray. A study in Romans was presented.

Other activities include the regular Wednesday night Bible studies, fellowship night at the Arneson home, a bake and rummage sale and many different smaller fellowship meetings.

- Pastor Gray

From Willmar, Minn.

The Luther Leaguers of Zion Lutheran in Willmar, Minn., attended the Faith Haven Youth Lodge this summer. Almost all of the youth were in attendance. Denise Berg gave a very interesting report on the Sunday following camp. The Zion bus overheated and the youth had to be picked up by the Green Lake bus. However, Roger Rasmussen came with the van on Friday. All the Leaguers went home in the van.

They enjoyed a time of games, volleyball and swimming at the parsonage home of Pastor and Mrs. Dennis Gray. Jeff Dahl and Anders Macy made it special by leading in the games. A few of the youth and parents went for a ride in Pastor Gray's boat which is called "Rev's Raft."

Also, two canoe trips were enjoyed by Zion youth and adults. One was up in the Boundary Waters and another on a local river near Litchfield, Minn. Ken Biegert was in charge of the trips and each trip had Bible studies and lots of interesting discussions.

- Pastor Gray

**TEENAGERS
the youth page
needs your input!**
Tell us what's going on
in your life, Luther League, etc.

Personalities

Rev. and Mrs. Connely Dyrud and family returned to Brazil on July 26 after a year's furlough in the U.S. They maintained a busy schedule of deputation during that time. The prayers of all friends go with them as they take up their work in Brazil again.

Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation; in charity; in spirit, in faith, in purity.

I Tim. 4:12

14. What did the show symbolize in those days? _____

15. Ruth and Boaz became the great grandparents of David. What prophecy was fulfilled here? Micah 5:2 _____

Isn't it interesting that the neighbors gave the child a name that was acceptable to the parents? v. 17 _____

Verses 18-22: The purpose of the Book seems to be to establish the ancestry of David. Let us daily renew our lives in Christ, those of us who know Him as our personal Savior; and those who have not accepted Him, surrender all to Him today. "Our redemption draweth nigh."

October is Our Missionary for a Day project. As we come to the close of another year may be make an effort to avail ourselves of financial needs of this fund so that we will not fail to provide the necessary funds to keep our missionaries on the field. Remember to make PRAYER your number 1 effort regarding our missions and then let God lead and guide as He would have you give. Send your offerings to our WMF treasurer - Mrs. Vernon Nelson, Box 261, Leeds, North Dakota 58346. Mrs. Grace Syverson - President.

WMF Bible Study

Ruth

October, 1982

A Glorious Reward of Faith

Read the fourth chapter of Ruth.

The transactions we are about to discuss took place at one of the gates of the city of Bethlehem. The Book of Ruth opened in the harvest field; then the scene shifted to the threshing floor. Now once more it changes and we are at the gate of the city.

1. What important functions did the gates of ancient cities serve? _____

The best way to protect a city in ancient times was to build a wall around it. There were no guided missiles and long-range bombers then. A comparatively small entrance could be defended much more effectively than the entire borders of a city, as would have been required had there been no walls.

2. Boaz gathered a council, brought in the nearest kinsman, and presented the case. We must remember the law of the kinsman-redeemer which we have mentioned before; read Deuteronomy 25:5-10. Why was the near kinsman so quick to say, "I will redeem it"? v. 4 _____

3. How did the near kinsman react when Boaz had a chance to finish his explanation? v. 6 _____

4. What is our attitude at a time like this when it comes to a material inheritance? Luke 12:13-15 _____

5. What did the near kinsman mean when he said, "Lest I mar mine own inheritance"? _____

His name is not even mentioned! Yet the name of the one who dared to take the chance is mentioned over and over again in this book and even on the very first page of the New Testament! "He that loveth his life shall lose it,"

6. Was there a kinsman who had the right to redeem? _____

This had to be settled in court that day.

7. Was there a kinsman who was able to redeem? _____

8. Was there a kinsman who was willing to redeem? _____

So also with Christ. He had to become our kinsman by becoming man. But as man alone he would not have been "wealthy" enough to redeem us. Only as the God-Man could He do it. Even as God-Man He had to be willing. It took the love of Christ to redeem us. It is written of Him that He "loved us and gave Himself for us."

9. As Boaz conducted this whole matter, how was he a type of our Lord? _____

10. Read II Samuel 23:8-17. What did Boaz find at this gate of Bethlehem? _____

As Boaz went to the gate where the water of Bethlehem was, so our ascended Lord gives the water of life freely to all those who will come to drink (John 7:37-39).

11. How can you obtain the water of life? Have you ever tasted of this water? Do you have the Spirit of Life, the Spirit of Christ? Romans 8:9, 14 _____

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Rev. 22:17

12. What do the first and second kinsmen represent? _____

There is no antagonism between law and grace (Romans 8:3). How beautifully the betrothal of Boaz and Ruth speaks of the grace of Christ to a poor unworthy people. He, too, betroths to Himself the stranger and the wanderer and will be coming again to receive us to Himself (John 14).

13. Did Ruth come to her redeemer in secret? What were the results? _____

So, when the sinner comes to Christ, no one can analyze what takes place in the secret of the heart; yet the fruits of repentance are revealed in his life, and thus, he, too, may become a world-wide blessing.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

What can be done about the use of profane and immoral language among young people

By Martin Hegland

A Christian young woman, who is greatly troubled by profanity and immoral stories and remarks among her friends, has written to ask what can be done about it.

At first thought the idea comes to mind that truly Christian young people will not be guilty of improper language. Upon further reflection, however, it will appear that Christians, too, have to guard themselves in this matter.

The Apostles constantly warned the early Christians to be careful in their use of language and to avoid profanity and lewd conversation. Experience and observation show that such warning is needed also today. What Christian, upon reflection, will not remember with shame that he has himself at times been guilty in this respect?

There is need therefore of the utmost care and watchfulness on the part of Christians to avoid dishonoring Christ in conversation. We cannot be too careful. There are many expressions in common use that may not be out and out profane, but that are coarse and vulgar. Such expressions will not be used by persons who have any regard for the ideals of Christian culture.

Let not the lips that sing and speak God's praises one moment be polluted the next by profane or smutty words. There is perhaps nothing that will so quickly and effectively deaden the conscience as the filthy words that are spoken. So as you value the spirituality that is in you by the grace of God, guard your tongue as you would your very life.

Pray earnestly, feed upon the Word of God largely, go to the Lord's Table frequently, and seek constantly the companionship of positive Christian personalities that you may be strong to resist the temptation of sinful conversation.

Another problem is what a Christian should do in the presence of non-Christians who make a practice of profanity and lewdness in speech. Such situations cannot always be avoided and they deeply pain cultured Christian souls.

At times it is in order to register a pointed public protest. A story in point is told of the great English statesman Gladstone. One of a group of men, being about to tell a story of doubtful propriety, looked about him and began: "I see that there are no ladies present." At once Gladstone spoke up: "I would remind the speaker that there are gentlemen present." The story was not told.

At other times perhaps the most tactful and effective way to counteract improper language is to speak to the offender privately, in all kindness. If you can win him for Christ, there will have

been solved not only the problem of sinful conversation, but also all other problems that have their roots in a wrong relationship to God. And you will have done your friend the greatest service that one human being can do for another.

Even if you do not win him for the Christian life, your speaking to him will perhaps deter him from future public offense along the same line.

To be sure, if you speak out publicly or privately against profane or immoral language, you may be called a "Goody, goody" or be accused of a "holier than thou" attitude, even though that be farthest from your thought. But you should have greater regard for the judgments of God than for the opinions of men. And rest assured of this, that while outwardly your companions may try to ridicule you and make things very unpleasant for you, deep down in their hearts they respect you and secretly wish that they had your idealism and your courage.

In spite of their treatment of you, try to maintain the utmost friendliness to them. Marvels have been wrought by such friendliness. You will discover, too, that when your associates want a friend in whom they can really trust they will instinctively turn to you because of the qualities of character you possess.

In this and in all problems of the Christian life, let your recourse be to God in prayer. He will give you guidance and power.

—From **Problems of Young Christians**
by Martin Hegland, Augsburg
Publishing House.

*"Let not the
lips that sing
and speak
God's praises
one moment
be polluted
the next by
profane or
smutty words."*

Next time: Shall Christians Keep Company with Non-Christians?

NEWS OF THE CHURCHES

Home mission teamwork

A noteworthy event took place at Minnesota Valley Lutheran Church (Ralph Tjelta, pastor) in Burnsville, Minnesota, on Sunday, July 11th, when members of Victory In Christ Home Mission Congregation of Maplewood, Minnesota (Harvey N. Carlson, pastor), travelled there to present a Braille Bible to Kay Hanson, associate member of the Burnsville congregation.

In a way that would be unsettling to say the least, to most of us, Kay suddenly became blind in the fall of 1981 while painting in her Burnsville home. Kay, actually a member of our Running Valley Congregation, Colfax, Wisconsin (Hubert De Boer, pastor), has been living and working in the Burnsville area for several years. Pastor Ralph Tjelta reports that the amazing thing about Kay's experience is that has taken her disability completely in stride and has exhibited amazing adaptability to her situation, showing superior skill in passing test requirements of the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. The learning requirements for a non-sighted person are difficult for sighted persons to comprehend. Even the smallest affairs of life and living need tending and care without the aid of vision. The reading of God's Word, however, is not a small affair, and Kay would be the first to acknowledge that. Her rapid advancement in acquiring Braille skills will be a boon to her daily feeding on God's messages to her from her own new Bible.

The Braille Bible itself, presented to her by Russell Bergstrom of the Victory in Christ congregation, has an interesting history. It was first purchased by Mr. Bergstrom and the writer for a Sunday School child blinded through the ravages of cancer. At that time the Lutheran Braille Evangelism organization had this particular Bible for sale through their representative, Pastor Carl Sunwall, who was then stocking the Bibles in his White Bear Lake home. The composite Bible consists of 18 volumes, each approximately two inches thick and about twelve inches square - hefty enough to make the user sure that he knows the text for the day.

Little Rachel, the recipient of the Bible, was led each Sunday into the classroom by the loving hand of her older, sighted brother. Eventually she came to know and trust in Jesus as she

used her ears to envision the love and plan of God for her salvation. Her fingers told her the same truths from the pages of her Braille Bible. Other current members of the Victory in Christ congregation can attest to the fact that they, too, eventually committed their lives to Christ after attending the Sunday School to which Rachel invited them as they played together in the back yards of their east St. Paul homes. Rachel's body, however, became a victim of the disease that plagued her and at the age of eleven she left this life to be with Jesus.

Thus a little child's work was done, but the spreading of the Word through her Bible was to continue. Rachel's mother returned the Bible to its donors and up to this time it has been stored in boxes awaiting a time to fill the needs of someone like Kay Hanson. In early July Jim Johnson of the 1982 Barnabas VI Home Mission Team that had successively served at both Victory in Christ congregation and then the Burnsville congregation realized that Kay would likely benefit from the Braille Bible. Russ Bergstrom had described it to him in a casual conversation during the team's two week stay at Victory In Christ. A single phone call to Russell culminated in the very pleasant and satisfying exchange that took place on July 11th.

Kay's reaction to her gift was that "God does provide a way to do with what you have," and "God lets certain things happen. He'll provide for all of our needs." It is the prayer of those at Victory in Christ that Kay will hide the Word in her heart as she reads it from her new "Tool" and that others will hear the Savior's saving words through her lips and life.

Victor Parsons
Victory in Christ
Lutheran Church,
Maplewood, Minn.

Shown here are new members received by Faith Lutheran Church, Running Valley, Colfax, Wis., last year. They are, left, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Buchner and family, Mrs. Steve Gustum and Mr. Philip Cruse. Pastor Hubert DeBoer is in the rear.

Elim Lutheran Church—

In April of 1968, Pastor Francis Monseth, who was serving Calvary Lutheran in Everett, and Pastor Robert Reith, who was serving Our Redeemer Lutheran in Kirkland, sought to establish an AFLC Home Mission church somewhere in the greater Everett area. God led them to a little brown church for sale in Lake Stevens. They liked what they saw and contacted headquarters in Minneapolis. Through the AFLC Secretary, two people were contacted who loaned the money to headquarters who in turn purchased the building and thus Lake Stevens Lutheran Church became a reality. The name was changed to Elim Lutheran at the time of incorporation in November of 1968. The steering committee consisted of Gordon Rux, Ken Stenberg and Martin Hegna.

Colfax, Wis.



It's nearly a year ago since Faith Lutheran Church of near Colfax, Wis., purchased a new Hammond organ. The organ was dedicated for God's glory on Sunday, Oct. 11, 1981. A lovely floral tribute was placed on the organ for this special occasion.

Following the morning service, a pot-luck dinner was held in the church basement after which everyone returned to the sanctuary to enjoy an inspiring concert by Jerry Orsoni of Eau Claire, Wis.

Mrs. Ruth Hanson, organist, is shown by the new organ.



Story of blessing

The first service was held September 8 led by Pastor Monseth. Calvary continued to share their pastor with Elim until August 1, 1981, when Pastor Monseth was called to Minneapolis. By April of 1970 Elim had ten charter families. The congregation grew and in 1972 chose to call a full-time pastor. Pastor Michael Brandt accepted the call and under his leadership the Lord continued to add to the flock. On Thanksgiving Day, 1975, we all shared in a mortgage-burning ceremony. Besides paying off the debt, extensive remodeling had been done. The Lord had blessed us—our cup overflowed! And so did the church. We began two services—one at 8:30, Sunday School for all ages following that service, and then an 11:00 service.

In 1977 a building committee was appointed to begin plans for a new church. Two acres of prime land became available and that was quickly paid for. In January, 1978, Pastor Brandt accepted a call to Amery, Wisconsin, and Pastor Richard Anderson accepted a call to Elim, arriving in April and building plans continued. When a financial goal had been reached in the spring of 1980, work proceeded on the new site. Parts of the building were contracted out but much in labor expense was saved by the willing hands of people who wanted a new sanctuary for their Lord. The theme verse was always Psalm 127:1—"Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain."

On Saturday evening, September 12, 1981, a communion service of praise and Thanksgiving was held in the new sanctuary with the first worship service the next day. God still continues to bless us.

Dedication services were held November 1, 1981, with the three pastors who have served Elim in attendance. The rite of dedication was led by Pastor Monseth.

Pastor Brandt continued on with special evening evangelistic services through November 5th with many answering the call of the Holy Spirit. His theme was "We Are More Than Conquerors." It was truly a blessed week.

A special thanks to each one who has had a part in one way or another to bring Elim into existence and an extra special thanks to Calvary Lutheran in Everett for their steadfast support through all the years.

May God continue to bless the Association as all of us seek to save souls in this sin-sick world.

Mrs. Bud Haugen

Mission Corporation By-Laws changed

A study of the Mission Corporation By-Laws has recently been made by legal counsel and some change in structure is taking place on the basis of that advice. The Corporation is incorporated in the State of North Dakota, where the first mission office of the AFLC was located, in Fargo.

One change is that from now on the Boards of World Missions and Home Missions will be known as the World Mission Committee and the Home Mission Committee. The reason for this is that a corporation cannot have two boards of directors, but it can have more than one committee.

Who, then, or what, will be the Board of Directors of the Corporation? The members of the two Committees. Four people, two from each Committee, will make up the executive committee of the Board. The chairman of the World Mission Committee will be the chairman of the Board. The chairman of the Home Mission Committee will be the vice-chairman. The secretary of the World Mission Committee will be the secretary of the Board and the secretary of the Home Mission Committee will be the assistant secretary.

The Corporation will also have four officers: a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. By gentlemen's agreement the president and secretary will be the chairman and secretary of the Home Mission Committee since it is those corporation officers who would normally sign any "deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other instruments" involved in Home Mission work.

The Corporation is made up of 50 members. It is AFLC practise that the annual conference choose from among two or more candidates for each vacancy in the corporation and send one name to the corporation for election.

As to the election of members to the World and Home Mission Committees, the nominees for each vacancy, whether it be an expired or unexpired term, shall come from the annual conference, two or more nominees for each vacancy.

The World Mission Committee is comprised of two clergy and three lay members. The Home Mission Committee has three clergy and two lay members.

The Schools Corporation will have similar language in its By-Laws pertaining to the election of members of its corporation and the Board of Trustees, pursuant to recent annual conference action, clarifying a point of some confusion in the past few years. It is now

understood that at least two names will go to the Schools Corporation from the conference for each Board of Trustees' vacancy, and one name for each Corporation vacancy.

Both corporations hold their annual meetings during the time of the annual conference. Each group has 50 members.

Here is the present makeup of the groups mentioned above:

Mission Corporation Officers

President—Rev. David Molstre
Vice-president—Mr. Kenneth Nash
Secretary—Rev. Philip Haugen
Treasurer—Mr. Owen Myhre

Executive Committee of the Board of Directors

Chairman—Rev. Amos Dyrud
Vice-Chairman—Rev. David Molstre
Secretary—Mr. Vernon Russum
Assistant Secretary—Rev. Philip Haugen

World Mission Committee

Rev. Amos Dyrud, Chairman
Mr. Kenneth Williams, Vice-Chairman
Mr. Vernon Russum, Secretary
Rev. Einar Unseth
Mr. Kenneth Nash

Home Missions Committee

Rev. David Molstre, Chairman
Mr. Paul Flaten, Vice-Chairman
Rev. Philip Haugen, Secretary
Rev. Richard Anderson
Mr. Owen Myhre

Schools Corporation Officers

President—Rev. Donald Greven
Vice-president—Rev. Gary Skramstad
Secretary—Mr. Eldon Hermunsleie
Treasurer—Mr. Donald Carter

Board of Trustees

Rev. Michael Brandt, Chairman
Mr. Stanley Holmaas, Vice-Chairman
Rev. Rodger Olson, Secretary
Mr. Kenneth Rolf
Dr. Philip Dyrud
Mr. Ralph Peterson
Rev. John P. Strand

IN MEMORIAM

Key: The name of the town is the address of the deceased. Following that is listed the name of the deceased, age, date of death, and the church in which he or she held membership.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Prairie City

Marvin Dutton, 76, July 16, Slim Buttes

CHURCH - WORLD NEWS

LUTHERAN BRETHREN PUT FAITH IN WORLD MISSIONS

Fergus Falls, Minn. — (LC) — The Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America has not lost its sense of mission.

At the 10,696-member church's annual convention in this town of 15,000 people in June, it was reported that two missionaries and their respective translation teams had completed translating the entire Bible into two African languages.

The Rev. Dr. Leslie Stennes' team worked on translating the Bible into Fulani, a language spoken in Central Africa by an estimated 10 million people. And the Rev. Don Raun's team finished a 15-year project in the Mundang language, which is spoken by about 110,000 people in Chad and Cameroon.

For the Lutheran Brethren, a nonliturgical and evangelistic church formed in Milwaukee in 1900 as a "protest against the spiritual death and other worldliness within the other Norwegian Lutheran synods," the translators' work is important for several reasons.

Despite being one of the smaller of more than 15 Lutheran denominations in the United States, the Lutheran Brethren have about 40 missionaries overseas — mostly in Chad and Cameroon. Others are in Japan and Taiwan.

About 45 percent of the church's \$1.3 million annual budget goes to mission work, said the Rev. David Rinden, 40, editor of publications for the Lutheran Brethren (which has no connection with the Church of the Brethren, a 170,000-member group noted for its emphasis on peace issues).

Rinden said the Lutheran Brethren has about 600 churches and 400 "preaching stations" in southern Chad and northern Cameroon. He added about 90,000 people in those two attend Lutheran Brethren services each week. He described the African Lutheran Brethren churches as "totally indigenous."

Some members of the Lutheran Brethren like to say the church worldwide has "more black members than white members," said Rinden.

The Lutheran Brethren also have one of the highest per capita giving figures of

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR
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LUTHERANS ALERT GROUP: DON'T JOIN NEW CHURCH

by Willmar Thorkelson

(Thorkelson is a Minneapolis-based freelance writer)

Bloomington, Minn. — (LC) — A small group of conservative Lutherans is urging congregations of the American Lutheran Church (ALC) to stay out of

any Lutheran church in the United States. Rinden did not have any complete recent statistics, but in the late 1970s the Lutheran Brethren per capita giving rate was estimated at \$400 per year. Rinden, however, said contributions to the national church alone averaged about \$200 per member, slightly lower than the total per capita giving figure for the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church.

The Lutheran Brethren practice open communion, but they do not ordain women as pastors.

The Lutheran Brethren have 95 congregations in the United States, and in recent years have experienced some growth in the Northwest from their traditional Minnesota-Dakotas base. The church had just 32 congregations in 1950.

"We have had some growth, but it hasn't been phenomenal," said Rinden.

Although the Lutheran Brethren do not plan to lessen their commitment to world missions, the 250 delegates at their annual convention did pass a resolution suggesting that a greater portion of the budget should be spent on home missions.

"There's a strong feeling toward establishing a stronger base here in the United States," said Rinden.

The Rev. Everaldo Strom has served as president of the Lutheran Brethren since 1968.

the proposed new Lutheran church and "align themselves" with church bodies faithful to historic Christianity and the Lutheran confessions of the 16th century.

Lutherans Alert-National, meeting at its 17th annual convention here June 23-25, charged the "ALC congregations are being asked to commit themselves to the merger without previous knowledge of what the doctrinal basis or confessional articles of the new church will be."

The 2.3-million-member ALC, based in Minneapolis, will vote this September on whether to join the 3-million-member Lutheran Church in America and the 107,000-member Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. No strong opposition to merger is expected at any of the separate September conventions.

Lutherans Alert claims about 3,600 people on its mailing list and has eight churches in its congregational arm called the Conservative Lutheran Union. Lutherans Alert asked those congregations dissatisfied with the prospect of merging the three Lutheran churches (probably by 1988) to join the Conservative Lutheran Union.

The Rev. Dr. Reuben Redal, president of Lutherans Alert, told a group of around 75 people that ALC congregations will lose their autonomy under the proposed merger and particularly the right to keep their church property if they decide to leave the new church.

"My advice to the congregations," the 61-year-old Redal said, "is to go out of the synod and go independent or join any other group that will not usurp their rights."