

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

February 5, 1980



*"Wash me and I
shall be whiter than snow."*

Psalm 51:7

Photo by Roger C. Huebner, D.D.S.

Euthanasia pp. 3, 14-15
Message from our Evangelist p. 5

AT THE MASTER'S FEET

Pastor Gary Skramstad



Unity of Spirit

"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3).

In studying the New Testament Church in the Book of Acts and the Epistles, we discover the ideals which we likewise would try to attain. If mere men were the authors of Holy Scripture that is all we would be able to see—perfected ideals. But God wrote the Bible through men. And He included living realities from the first church. One of these realities is that of endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit.

At the close of Acts 2 we read about the first experiences of the Church at Jerusalem. The *upreach* experience of worship and praise to a living God, the *inreach* experience of loving, knowing, and sharing within the body of believers, and the *outreach* experience of

having a positive reputation and influence upon the rest of the community was their Way of Life. We could become so envious of those who belonged to that first congregation. But when God set out to communicate spiritual truth to the ages to come He knew how important it would be to show the humanness of those early Christians, too.

Soon we see the persecution from without. Peter and the rest were warned not to ever preach about that Jesus again. The Christians gathered and prayed for faithfulness and boldness.

Then came the lies from within. Annanias and Sapphira were soon carried out to their graves since they hindered the unity of the Spirit. This unusual action of God must certainly have had a lasting impression upon the rest, knowing that God is ever aware of all our actions. Could it be that some in our own congregations are pretending to be committed totally to the Lord and yet aware that God knows and hears their lies? Hypocrisy disrupts the unity that we are to endeavor to keep.

In Acts 6 we see the first open church fight in Jerusalem. Man would record only the good that happened but God knows what we need to learn. Those first believers were all Jews. But some had come from an area where they spoke Hebrew and others spoke Greek. One of the *inreach* experiences of the first church was that of taking care of the needy and the widows. Among the many duties of the Apostles was that of distributing to those needs. It seems that the Hebrew-speaking widows received more goods and attention than the Greek-speaking widows. Charges of partiality were laid. Feelings of hurt and loneliness were real. The problem had to be resolved. God gave an answer. Seven godly men were chosen

as the first deacons who were to assume these temporal responsibilities so the Apostles could devote more time to the ministering of the Word. Out of those seven came the first martyr, Stephen, and the great evangelist, Philip.

Other problems were soon to develop. Personality problems among the leaders erupted. Paul and Barnabas differed concerning an invitation for John Mark to accompany them on a missionary journey. But as Paul was in prison years later he asked for this young man whom he had rejected to come to him. And some people liked some preachers better than others. In the first letter to Corinth we read about those who were of Paul, Apollos, Cephas and Christ. Could some of our own people become more attached to pastors and leaders than to Christ Himself? As we endeavor to keep unity we must recognize the inborn ability to follow man. Let us love God supremely and thank Him for all those He has given to edify the Church and win souls into the Kingdom.

We of the AFLC also are human. There are rumors every so often of discord, hurt and confusion. Brethren, endeavor to keep the unity! Realize that Satan desires to have a victory. Don't allow him to rob God of Christ's best in you. Realize that you, too, can be, at times unknowingly, used by the devil. Your view might be right but your reaction wrong. Then let us remember that Christ makes us whole. We have the same God today. Christ still heals. We don't have to fall apart when trouble comes. Believe that God has an answer. Endeavor to present a healthy body to Christ. †

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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

All communications concerning contents of this magazine should be addressed to: Rev. Raynard Huglen, Editor, Newfolden, Minn. 55738.

Layout design: Solveig Larson.
Editorial Board: Mr. Sheldon Mortrud, Rev. Francis Monseth, Rev. Robert Lee.

Send annual \$4.00 subscription to THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55441. Second class postage paid at Minneapolis, Minn.

Volume 18, Number 3
USPS 588-620

*A student nurse
looked at the
moral aspects
of mercy killing*

Euthanasia



*by Miss Eunice
Rokke, R.N.
Fargo, N. Dak.*

My first encounter with this "new" concept of euthanasia occurred when I was eleven years old. My grandmother was 92 years old at that time. My dad and I would go to visit her frequently. She had become increasingly forgetful and more dependent. Then the accident—her fall, in which she broke many bones and ended up in the intensive care unit of the hospital. It was only a short while before my grandmother died. It was the closest that I had ever been to a death. I remember asking my father if he wasn't sad because his mom had died. He told me no, he was happy. He went on to explain that after seeing all those tubes, and that Grandma was so sick, he knew that she would be happier and much better off to go home to Jesus. I never doubted him, nor did I ever regret my grandmother's death.

Euthanasia was not yet a term that I knew or understood. It was not until after I was in high school that I first heard of it. Even then, just about all we knew was that it was synonymous with "mercy-killing." I knew what "killing" meant, and that was certainly not right. I'm not sure whether or not it occurred to me that euthanasia could possibly be related to that principle which my father had introduced to me a few years before.

I think much of the confusion about euthanasia exists because of the broad meaning that has been attached to the word. It is important that one understands what is meant by this term. The word comes from two Greek words: "eu" meaning easy, happy, and painless, and "thanatos" meaning death.

Its first appearance in the English language occurred in the 17th century to mean gentle, easy death. Today "euthanasia" can be subdivided into at least four different classifications.

1. *voluntary and direct*: This occurs when it is decided upon and carried out by the individual. In this classification, it is synonymous with suicide.
2. *voluntary but indirect*: An example of this would be the person who chooses this himself, but someone else carries it out for him.
3. *direct but involuntary*: This is the "mercy-killing" which is done on a patient's behalf without his previous request.
4. *involuntary and indirect*: The person is cared for while he is dying, but there is no use of any extra or specific measures to prolong his life.

After separating euthanasia into these four categories, it is also necessary to consider what people might be placed into each. The first group which is likely to be thought of is those with a painful and terminal illness. A major example would be the cancer patient who has not long to live. Some have also considered groups which include the retarded, the mentally ill, and the old suffering from senility. Still another group would be the infants and young children with gross physical deformities and mental defects. After pondering on all these, it is possible to

"There is a vast difference between not fighting death and actively putting and end to life."

conclude whether euthanasia is right or wrong in each group. There is a vast difference between not fighting death and actively putting an end to life. The former is related to respect for life, the latter loses this respect.

First, let us look at the group that includes the retarded, the mentally ill, and the senile. Euthanasia for them would require the direct but involuntary form. This would have to be actually "killing" them. The reason for euthanasia in this group is based on the incapacity of their minds. This is to say that the mind of man is the center of the universe, a place that man does not occupy.

The summer of my junior year of high school I began working as a nurse's aid in a nursing home for the aged. For three years I did this and for three years I was always placed in caring for the most helpless and senile. I

Euthanasia . . .

was confronted with many conflicts within me that I had to struggle with during those three years. One of those conflicts was the question, "Why do these people exist?" It seemed as though their lives were only those of misery, not only for themselves, but for their families who remembered how they used to be. There had to be a purpose, but I could not find it. Then someone showed me the purpose:

For one thing, they provide jobs for those who care for them. And even greater than this, the purpose of their lives may be to develop character in other men. God uses them to develop in us what is necessary, so that we might be prepared for greater tasks."

"To develop character in me." This became a realization to me during my third year in this work. The home I worked at that year was poorly staffed. Many evenings became a "rat-race" to try to get done the very minimum of what was supposed to be done. Many evenings I felt frustrated and guilty knowing I was not giving the care that I should. Such were the circumstances the night that I was helping old Edna to bed. She was babbling incoherently as usual, but I was half caught up in my own frustrations and conflicts from within. As I laid Edna down in her bed, she suddenly wrapped her arms around my neck and smiled as she gave me a big hug. To me it was more than a hug. It was the encouragement that I had longed for and needed. It was a renewal in knowing the principle that every man has a purpose for which to live.

These principles of living man and his worth can likewise be applied to those infants and young children who have been born with gross physical deformities and mental defects. To take their lives from them would be saying that it is the quality-of-life, rather than life itself, that is important.

In looking at the group that includes the terminally ill, there are new considerations which must be faced. These people are dying. To speed up that death by injecting lethal doses of drugs, or by other means, would be murder. But to allow that death to

take place while gentle care for the patient is given would show respect for the life that still exists.

When I began working as a student nurse, our instructions were sometimes, "R.T.C.," which means routine terminal care. We were told that any patient with this order was to have the same respect and care that every patient has a right to. It was only that if they should have a cardiac arrest, we should not try to resuscitate them. They would have lived their life and their death would mean a completion of that life. It was an order that was

One group that I have not as yet touched upon is that of the "human vegetable" example. This refers to those people who exist only because of the machines that keep them going. Their brain is physically dead. When this occurs, our laws state that it is legal to detach the person from the life-giving machines. It is difficult for me to see what is exactly right or wrong in this situation. Should I ever be confronted with such a decision, I think I would carry it out so far as the law permits. Perhaps this will become clearer for me to understand in time.

"Their brain is physically dead. When this occurs, our laws state that it is legal to detach the person from the life-giving machines."

never questioned. The doctors would have discussed it with the family and it only applied to those who were very near the end of a terminal illness.

This involuntary and indirect means of euthanasia is the only aspect of it that is legal in the United States. It is the only act that does not involve deliberately taking away a life. Some argue that it is the end that justifies the means. But if man performs the act of stopping life, how can he be certain just what that end is supposed to be? I have met a man who spent years in Communist prison camps. He told how he had once saved up on his medications so that he might take them all at once and thereby end his life. But when he had saved enough, he knew that it was wrong, and he could not do it. Later, he was released from his imprisonment and now lives in California, the head of an organization to inform people of the Communist government and aid those still imprisoned there. Had this man accepted that aspect of euthanasia which permitted him to end his life, he would never have influenced all the people that he has now.

Euthanasia is a complicated issue. It is one that faces every nurse and one that every nurse must consider and weigh against her own values. All aspects must be considered. The question that separates these aspects is, "Do I believe in actively putting an end to life?"

I am presently working part-time caring for an invalid woman in a private home. She is only 39 years old and has a family, but became almost completely helpless both physically and mentally after a car accident and severe insulin reaction. Her husband has worked hard to care for his wife and family. But I think he summed it all up when he told me the reason for his strength and efforts. He said, "She's pretty precious to us." Is not every life precious in the sight of God? †

(Ed. note: Miss Rokke, a former student at Association Free Lutheran Bible School, wrote the above paper as course work in her training as a nurse and received high commendation from her instructor for it. See also "Missouri Synod Receives Report on Euthanasia" on page 15.)

"I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well."

Psalm 139:14

THE CALL TO SAY YES TO JESUS

by Pastor Kenneth Pentti,
Evangelist-Youth Worker

"And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; that the Lord called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I" (I Sam. 3:2-4).

The sun bade farewell to the daylight hours and the shadows of the night came creeping in. Silence was the signature that the long night had begun. The last child had long since been tucked safely in bed and hours had passed since the last flickering lamp succumbed to the darkness of the night. All was still across the little land of Palestine.

Out of the quiet darkness young Samuel heard a clear voice calling him. The Scripture says, "Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him" (I Sam. 3:7). Therefore he was confused until he responded to the

voice's fourth call. The voice in the night was the voice of God calling him to a new and glorious life.

Out of the darkness of sin's night many voices speak to you this moment. Like Samuel, you do not yet know the Lord, but the voices speak nevertheless. Listen to the voices as they beckon you to the new and glorious life of a Christian.

CONSCIENCE _____

The Voice of Conscience. When the accusing religionists had brought their final charge against the fallen woman in the temple and Christ had invited the man who was without sin to cast the first stone, John records, "And they which heard it, *being convicted by their own conscience*, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last" (Jn. 8:9a).

That which convicted and reprimanded them was not the pathetic condition of the woman or even the words of Christ, but rather their own conscience. Apart from what the Bible says and apart from what this preacher may preach, there is one voice you cannot escape, and that is the voice of your own conscience.

There are at least three reasons why conscience condemns. *First*, it condemns because of the deeds you have done. The guilt feelings that follow rob you of any real and abiding joy of life. *Second*, because, as the Prodigal Son, you know a better way of living; your conscience speaks to condemn you. *Third*, because you know God is displeased, your conscience condemns (Jn. 3:36b).

The voice of conscience brings contrition. Otherwise conscience would be destructive and this is never God's intention. It is meant to produce a "sorrow unto repentance." "Peter remembered the word of Jesus . . . And he went out, and wept bitterly" (Matt. 26:75). Why does conscience lead to contrition? I suggest three reasons.

"The voice of conscience brings contrition. Otherwise conscience would be destructive and this is never God's intention."

Because of the seriousness of sin, because of the one offended by sin (God), and because of the shame produced by sin, conscience is designed to produce contrition.

You may attempt to run from God as Jonah or hide from God as Adam and Eve but you can neither escape Him nor your conscience. Everywhere you go you take your conscience with you and as a "hound of heaven" it follows you night and day. It calls you from the darkness of sin's night into the light of God's grace.

INFLUENCE _____

The Voice of Influence. This voice is often disturbing. People don't like to hear this voice. They don't like to be reminded that they have an influence for which they are accountable. But the voice speaks nevertheless.

The voice of influence reminds you of your influence on others. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Rom. 14:7). There are two kinds of influence.

Conscious influence is the kind Andrew brought to bear on Peter when he led him to Jesus. You are aware when you choose to use this power on others. You can control it at all times. But this is not the greatest portion of your influence.

Unconscious influence is the kind Peter had on John at the open sepulchre. John paused on the outside, Peter rushed on in. He saw, he rejoiced and believed. Without a word, without a gesture he unconsciously influenced John to come in and to see and believe, for the Scripture simply says, "Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed" (Jn. 20:8). Perhaps, for every one person you influence consciously you influence ten others unconsciously. Your entering the sepulchre of salvation today would influence others of whom you will have no knowledge until the Judgment. But your staying on the outside makes others feel comfortable in their unsaved condition.

The voice of influence asserts your responsibility for others. Men have never liked to hear this truth. They have always tried to avoid the fact that they are responsible for others. When

Voices . . .

asked about his own brother, whom he had slain, Cain shrugged his shoulders and said to God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9b). The answer comes across the ages, "Yes, you are your brother's keeper!"

The voice of influence may be that of a little child in your home speaking of Jesus, the Bible or the church. Jesus reminds us of the responsibility that is ours. 'It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones' (Lk. 17:2).

The voice of influence warns of the penalty for failing to respond. The penalty is twofold. *First*, there is the guilt of others on your hands throughout eternity (Ezek. 33:6). *Second*, there is your own death in sin (Jn. 8:24b).

WISDOM

The Voice of Wisdom. This voice declares that the only wise and business-like thing to do is to accept Christ and thus not run the risk of an eternity in hell. Jesus was a practical-minded man. He put this matter on a profit and loss basis. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mk. 8:36).

Christ is saying, 'In the profit column, place the whole world, and in the loss column, place your soul. You could never balance a set of books like that. You would come out far in the red. You are bankrupt!'

The voice of wisdom speaks of the infinite value of your soul. Christ says that nothing is of enough value to give in exchange for your soul. God prizes your soul above anything else. The one factor which God considered worthy of His Son's death was the soul of a man (Jn. 3:16).

Actually, you do not *possess* a soul, you *are* a soul. This thing which we call a soul is really you—the you that loves, hates, fears, thinks, feels. This is the you that is independent of your body. You possess a body as a "space suit" in which you must live as long as you are on this planet earth. But you don't need this body to live. The Genesis account tells us that God created man as "a living *soul*" (Gen. 2:7).

The voice of wisdom points out the

folly of spiritual death. Even God asks, "Why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth" (Ezek. 18:31b, 32a).

The greatest act of folly you will ever pull is to die and go to hell. For there is no excuse! It's a tough matter to go to hell. God has done all that even He can do to save you. If you insist on going to hell, you must step over the cross of Christ, a Christian home perhaps, Christian friends, the open Bible; you must close your ears to Gospel preaching, turn your back on Bible-believing churches around you and render futile the prayers offered in your behalf. You *can* go to hell, but wisdom says this is your most foolish mistake.

The voice of wisdom acknowledges the plight of your present condition. To ignore a personal and pressing need is never a mark of wisdom.

Your present condition is a lost one (Rom. 3:10). It also is a condemned condition. You don't need to wait until you are a broken person or guilty of some great sin or until you die. The Bible makes it clear that you are "condemned already" (Jn. 3:18b) and wisdom says you should acknowledge this fact.

A man awaiting execution on death row does not need to wait until the current grips his body to be condemned. He is condemned already, death only seals that condemnation.

GOD

The Voice of God. More loudly, more authoritatively and more persuasively than the voices of conscience or influence or wisdom calls the voice of God. "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).

The voice of God speaks of your inability to justify yourself in His sight (Rom. 3:20). It speaks of your inability to save yourself either through works (Eph. 2:8, 9) or through sincerity (Prov. 14:12).

The voice of God tells of your accountability. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12). You are accountable for your deeds (Matt. 12:36) as well as for your rejection of Christ (Matt. 10:33).

"A man awaiting execution on death row does not need to wait until the current grips his body to be condemned."

The voice of God proclaims Christ's availability. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20).

Each of these voices beckons you to leave the darkness of sin's night and to enter the light of God's salvation. "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts!" (Heb. 4:7b).

Will you repent of your sins and invite Christ into your heart to be your Lord and Savior? †

WITH OUR EVANGELIST



Kalispell, Mont.

Faith and Stillwater Lutheran Churches

Feb. 18-25

John Rieth and Dale Mellgren, pastors
Ev. Kenneth Pentti, speaker

GOD'S PEACE

I prayed for you this morning
That Jesus will be near
And bless you with His presence
And take away all fear.

I prayed that He would touch you
And give to you His peace,
That He will be your Refuge
And from your pain release.

Whate'er is best He'll give you;
We know not, but He knows—
With His presence near you,
May you find a sweet repose.

(Written for a sick friend.)

Laura Norum
Amery, Wis.



Happy Acres

GRANDPA HAGLUND AT HAPPY ACRES

"Hi," said little Beth to Mr. Haglund as she climbed into her high chair just across the table from the old man.

Mr. Haglund looked at Beth, but he said nothing.

So Beth blinked her eyes at him, smiled her widest smile and said, "We like me. Don't you like me, too?"

Mr. Haglund could not keep from smiling at that. He said, "Ya. I like you. I had a little girl like you once. I called her Tulla because she had curly hair."

"Me curly hair, too. Me, Tulla, too?"

"Ya," said the old man. "You be a Tulla, too!"

He said little more during the meal, but he did manage to smile again, this time at Ann when she asked him politely if there wasn't something she could pass him.

When he stood up from the table, he turned to Mom and he bowed stiffly to her, saying, "A thousand thanks for the supper. It was good."

Mr. Haglund had both smiled and thanked! Ann wanted to jump up and down for joy. But she stood very quietly, then began to help Mom clear the table.

An hour later, the old man was ready to leave for the Rest Home. But this

time when he reached the door, he turned around. He took off his old black hat. He turned it around in his hands.

Ann could see there was something he was trying hard to tell. He cleared his throat and rumbled "Harrumph!" Then, with both hands pressed against his hat, he said to Mom, "You have been good to me. Thank you for the cards you send me. And for the slippers. I am an old man. I have no money. You have been good to me when you knew I could never do anything in return."

Ann saw Mr. Haglund's lips trembling as though he wanted to cry. "My wife—she was a good woman. Like you. She believed in the Bible, too. You and your man here—you believe in the Bible. That is why you have been so good to me. Is it not so?"

Mom's eyes were dewy as she nodded. "Yes, it is so. 'For the love of Christ constrains us' " (II Cor. 5:14).

There was a big tear in one of Mr. Haglund's squinty eyes as he said, "This morning I take from my trunk my wife's Bible. Now I read it. I want to believe in Jesus, too. I have seen Jesus in you people."

The grumpiness would all go away, Ann knew. Already there was a new gentleness in the old man.

As he turned to go out the door, he smiled right into Ann's face and said,

"Good night, Girlie."

His voice was tender. Ann felt almost as though he had patted her shoulder.

He would be coming back to Happy Acres many times, she knew. With Jesus in his heart, he would be another grandfather for the Johnsons!

(Last in a Series)



MEMORY VERSE

For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And He died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. II Corinthians 5:14-15 (RSV)



In India

Pastor Snipstead, Pastor Dasari, Evangelist Prabhudas, and Pastor Enderlein mingled with the people after a service in the prayer-shed in the city of Tenali. This was one of the places visited on the recently completed visit to the field in India.

YOUTH

Tough guys don't cry

The words echoed in his ears. "Tough guys don't cry." Every detail floated back to him. In horror he relived the agonizing scene.

It was odd. Only yesterday he'd had it all. His father's fortune too easily put him through college, a set of wheels his dad had given him. He was the captain of the Brookfield High football team and the town's hero. The prettiest girl in town belonged to him. Then the nightmare.

The score was 6 to 7. Brookfield behind. Only twenty seconds left of the game. Kyle was out in the open, running for the last touchdown. He was nearing the ten-yard line. The crowd roared. He welled up with pride. Once more he would carry the ball to bring their team to victory. Suddenly—it seemed out of nowhere—something hit him hard. Immediately his forward motion reversed and he flew back. His head slammed into the ground. As the pain surged through his neck, becoming unbearable, tears threatened to fall. A hand like sandpaper touched his cheek. He looked up into Dick's face. His friend was speaking. Foggy at first. Then clearer.

"Kyle. Ya okay, Kyle?" Anticipation caused his voice to tremble.

A lone tear fell from Kyle's eye. "Hey, kid. Tough guys don't cry," commanded Dick, scratching the tear away. Kyle had smiled, but that was yesterday. Now, alone in the hospital room, paralyzed, how could anyone hold back the tears? All his dreams of college—gone! His football career—gone! His girl? She wouldn't want him now. Gone! Gone! Gone! Everything. He wished he could slam his fist against the wall but it lay limp against the pale sheet. He opened his ashen lips to swear but only miserable sobs

"His football career—gone! His girl? She wouldn't want him now."

came out. He thought of Dick. (He'd be the captain now.) Then there was Tommy. Quiet old Tom. Never said much but always seemed so peaceful and content. Religion. That's what made him that way. He never preached to us guys, though. But you could see it in his eyes. What was it Tommy had said once? Oh, yeah. "It's not religion, Ky. It's Jesus Christ. He satisfies me." Funny. Tom never tried to push that stuff off on me. Strange kid, that Tom. Poor as a church mouse but always content.

Kyle couldn't erase Tommy from his mind. (He doesn't have much, yet he seems to have it all!) He sighed in exasperation. (It just doesn't make sense! Or—does it?) Again he recalled Tom's words. "It's Jesus. He satisfies me." (Yea. Tommy was like that. Strange, that Tom.)

Warm beads of water poured from his eyes. "I need somethin," he spoke aloud—urgently. It was all too clear. Alone in the room his tears became cool springs of water as his voice came in broken sobs. "I . . . I . . . Oh God, I need You," he sighed heavily. "I'm not deserving, but once Tom mentioned that You forgive. Can You . . . can You accept me J . . . J . . . Jesus?"

Again the words echoed through his mind. "Kyle. Tough guys don't cry." "It's okay, Dick," he thought. "Someday you'll understand, but I hope it won't take so much for you."

Points to ponder:

What does bring satisfaction to you?

Was Tom right in not preaching to the guys?

Can actions relay any message?

How do *your* actions speak? †

—Stephanie Krueger

LEAGUES ALIVE

Bemidji, Minn.

The College Age Group and Luther League of Bethany Lutheran Church, Bemidji, Minn., went carolling on Dec. 21st to two rest homes, our newly-built hospital and to several of the church shut-ins. The highlight of the evening was singing in the city and county jail and getting right back to where the prisoners were and giving out apples and oranges to them and to the jailers. Pastor Ray Persson and two of our college-age men go each Wednesday evening before the midweek service and spend an hour of visitation at the jail. They have seen spiritual results. One 18 year-old boy, who killed one of his classmates two years ago, is now working on a Bible study correspondence course provided to him by a Christian uncle in California. Many are reading Gideon Bibles which our group provides for them.

The College Age Group meet every other Tuesday at 6:30 a.m. for breakfast and Bible study at Country Kitchen. The students take turns leading the study. AFLBS students who have been in the group or are present members are: Wanda Holmaas, Kevin Spading, Jerry Walker, Russ Skoog and Harold Voth. Harold is now at Bible School and serves as chaplain of the student body.

The Luther League and College Age Group will be hosts to the North Central District Luther League rally April 19th. †

Mason, Wis.

On Oct. 12-14, 1979, the Faithland Luther League of Mason, Wis., went to Mogasheen Resort at Cable, Wis. For two days we enjoyed fun and fellowship.

Friday night everyone got settled into their cabins, ate pizzas and some
(Continued on page 10)

The Lutheran Ambassador

editorials

THE NEW LOOK

By now you are getting accustomed to the new look in *The Lutheran Ambassador*. Several changes were made beginning with the first issue of January, the start of Volume XVIII.

First of all, we have a new cover, our third since we began. Elsewhere in this issue you will see the three covers pictured. In addition to the name of the paper, which declares that we are a "Lutheran" publication, the other constant feature of all three is the cross of Jesus Christ. The theme verse continues to be II Corinthians 5:20: "So we are *ambassadors* for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." Reconciliation is possible only through the cross. It was there that Jesus finished His work of redemption. It is at the foot of the cross that an individual experiences reconciliation in his own life.

For most people it is somewhat disturbing to see the familiar changed and we share that feeling, but nevertheless we hope you will grow to like our new cover style, too.

On page 2, "Meditation Moments" has been changed to "At the Master's Feet." The new title, too, is very appropriate for a page intended for quiet meditation on something from God's Word. Thus, it is a sitting "at the Master's feet."

Readers who have been with us for a while will know that this is the third title for page 2 also. The first one we ever had was "According to the Word."

A third change is one you will find in the back pages of each issue this year. "A Minister's Musings" (missing this time), new this year as successor to "Thoughts from Tryg," has its own new heading. Incorporated into it is the picture of the writer, Pastor Einar Unseth. The picture of the writer on page 2 will also be carried there from now on, as is that of Pastor Gary Skramstad on page 2, writer of "At the Master's Feet."

Speaking of pictures, Miss Solveig Larson, our capable layout design specialist, is presently building up a new file of pictures of our pastors and some other folks. Seems like most of us do change in appearance over the period of a few years and so this updating is needed and welcome.

Expedient delivery of the *Ambassador* to the homes and offices of our readers continues to be a problem. Mechanical breakdown at our printers last fall, unavoidable delay in getting our 1979 Index prepared, and the Christmas and New Year holidays have contributed to the sluggishness of delivery of some recent issues. And the Postal Service must share the blame for some of the regular slowness that plagues us. There are no easy solutions, but you could try

this: check locally to see if your local post office is slow in sorting and distributing second class mail.

For the women, all WMF Bible Studies are now being printed in the first issue of a month, even if publication date falls on the 1st. This will help in some cases to get the Studies out in time for the following month. With your help, we will try to run announcements far enough in advance to be of use. But if events happen before our announcement comes, the latter will still carry some news value. We'll do our best.

Watch for more special issues in the future, featuring in some cases expanded coverage of topical subjects. This is something upon which we're working.

The Lutheran Ambassador has now completed 17 years of publication, a total of 425 issues. We go forward confident that the Lord will continue to provide and with the prayer that the *Ambassador* may be an even greater instrument in God's work in our world.

PUBLICATION VENTURES

One publication project underway, another in the dreaming stage.

Our Seminary is promoting the publication of the Bicentennial Series of articles on the Augsburg Confession which we ran in *The Lutheran Ambassador* in 1976. This book will be out later this year. The writers are pastors and professors of the church. More on this later.

The dream is the publication of a book containing pictures of the churches and pastors of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. Other items which could be included are pictures and write-ups on our Schools, Missions, etc. Documents of importance would also be fit material.

As we say, this is in the dream stage. A natural target for such a project could be our 25th anniversary in 1987 or 1988, but should we wait that long, if it is a worthy endeavor?

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Various known as the *Guiding Principles* or *Fundamental Principles* (Norw. *Ledende Prinsipper*), the 12 statements given on page are one of the chief documents of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. Following the Holy Bible and the five main symbols of the Lutheran Church (the three Creeds, Luther's *Small Catechism* and the unaltered *Augsburg Confession*) the *Fundamental Principles* rank next.

Hopefully, every adult member of our AFLC congregations has read the *Principles* by this time. But any time is a good time to read them again. The statements do not say everything about everything, but they have something powerful to say about their subject, the local Christian congregation.

We commend the document for your study and meditation. †

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Guiding Principles of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

1. According to the Word of God, the congregation is the right form of the Kingdom of God on earth.

2. The congregation consists of believers who, by using the means of grace and the spiritual gifts as directed by the Word of God, seek salvation and eternal blessedness for themselves and for their fellow men.

3. According to the New Testament, the congregation needs an external organization with membership roll, election of officers, stated times and places for its gatherings, and other similar provisions.

4. Members of the organized congregation are not, in every instance believers, and such members often derive

false hope from their external connection with the congregation. It is therefore the sacred obligation of the congregation to purify itself by the quickening preaching of the Word of God, by earnest admonition and exhortation, and by expelling the openly sinful and perverse.

5. The congregation directs its own affairs, subject to the authority of the Word and the Spirit of God, and acknowledges no other ecclesiastical authority or government above itself.

6. A free congregation esteems and cherishes all the spiritual gifts which the Lord gives for its edification, and seeks to stimulate and encourage their use.

7. A free congregation gladly accepts the mutual assistance which the congregations can give one another in the work for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

8. Such assistance consists partly in the mutual sharings of spiritual gifts among congregations through conferences, exchange visits, lay activities, etc., whereby congregations are mutually edified, and partly in the voluntary and Spirit-prompted cooperation of congregations for the accomplishing of such tasks as exceed the ability of the individual congregation.

9. Among such tasks may be mentioned specifically the training of pastors, distribution of Bibles and other Christian literature, home missions, foreign missions, Jewish missions, deaconess homes, children's homes, and other works of mercy.

10. Free congregations have no right to demand that other congregations shall submit to their opinion, will, judgment, or decision; therefore, domination by a majority of congregations over a minority is to be rejected.

11. Agencies found desirable for conducting the joint activities of congregations, such as conferences, committees, officers, etc., cannot in a Lutheran Free Church, impose any obligations or restrictions, exert any compulsions, or lay any burden upon the individual congregation, but have the right only to make recommendations to, and requests of, congregations and individuals.

12. Every free congregation, as well as every individual believer, is constrained by the Spirit of God and by the privileges of Christian love to do good and to work for the salvation of souls and the quickening of spiritual life, as far as its abilities and power permit. Such free spiritual activity is limited neither by parish nor by synodical bounds. †

Youth . . .

even sang until 2 in the morning. The next morning we tried to be up by 7, but not all made it. That morning, after devotions and breakfast, our time was occupied by Bible studies and discussions.

After dinner we had a four-hour recreation time, which included the arrival of our guests, Rob and Pat Lewis and family. Then at about 5:30 we gathered for a picnic supper. Afterward we had another good discussion which answered questions for everyone.

Then the lights were dimmed and the projector turned on. We watched a movie entitled "Just Last Summer," which told of the problems and compromises a Christian girl had to go through while dating a non-Christian. An afterglow followed the movie, where all had a learning experience from each other as we told what was on our minds.

What happened next surpassed all that had happened before. Once again the lights went out and we took an imaginary walk. And as we walked the

long dusty road, whom should we meet but Jesus. We walked and talked with Him for a while, about our problems and our needs. Then we parted at the crossroads. What we learned about our relationship to Christ remained with us. We closed with a "round prayer" in which everyone poured out his or her heart to the Lord. It was a blessed time and a wonderful evening.

Sunday once again found us up and raring to go. At 10, Rob Lewis had the service and we were each blessed as we learned about ways to share our Lord with others. We all wished we could have had more time to get to know the Lewis family. We thank them for coming and sharing the weekend with us.

After they left we sadly packed our bags, sang a few more songs and reluctantly left for home.

The weekend, despite a few minor casualties, was an event we will always carry in our memories as we continue in our schooling and jobs. †

—Corr.

“Strange as it may seem there are multitudes of so-called Christians who are exactly like those Jews . . . they will tell you that they are regular church people; they have been baptized; they go to the Lord’s table but they can tell you no more. . . . Of faith, and grace, and repentance, and holiness and spiritual mindedness they know nothing at all. . . . We must be joined to Christ Himself by a living faith. We must know something experimentally of the work of the Spirit in our hearts, if we are to be delivered from the wrath to come and have boldness in the day of judgment.” (from *Expository Thought on the Gospels*, page 548, by J. C. Ryle)

14. In vs. 31-36, note that the discussion is around the theme of true freedom. Who is a bonds slave? v. 34 _____

15. What does it mean to be free? Free from what? _____

I John 1:9 _____

Isaiah 1:18 _____

Romans 6:16, 17 _____

Galatians 3:13 _____

Romans 16:20 _____

(A personal question—Are you being set free by the Son of God?) _____

16. How can a person escape death? (v. 51) _____

17. For further blessing list in a notebook or on a separate sheet of paper every claim that Jesus makes about Himself in vs. 31-59. Pray over these words and ask for grace to believe Jesus is all that He says He is for you.

18. Make another list of every accusation that Jesus brings against the Jews. Let this also be heart-searching and pray for help to heed these warnings and turn from these attitudes.

Closing prayer for everyone:

I thank You, Lord Jesus, that You are the Light of this world. I praise You that I do not need to live in a pit of darkness caused by sin and guilt. You invite me to continually listen to Your Word, to give up my own way, confess my sin and follow You. I follow by paying close attention to all Your commands and obeying them each day by Your grace. I follow by claiming all Your promises also. Then You will shed light on my path and I shall never die in my sin. I can be set free from guilt, bondage and the accusations of the devil. Help me to love You, Jesus, more every day and glorify You with my life as the Father glorified You when You lived on this earth. In Jesus’ Name, Amen. †



W.M.F. Bible Study

March, 1980

The Gospel of John

Study assignment: John 8:12-59

If you feel your Christian life is not what it ought to be you can do something about it right now in this lesson. “It is true that the new birth is a miracle that only God can perform, but it is also true that “we are God’s fellow workers.” Only God can make the grain to grow, but He will not go out and plant it; the farmer will have to do that. Only God can give saving power to the Word, but He will not take down the Bible and open it and turn the pages and read it to you. You must do that.” (From the April, ’79 *Ambassador*, by C. A. Wendell)

Have you decided now to open the Bible and give this lesson a good try? (Before you begin to study, we suggest you sincerely pray this prayer:

“Open my eyes that I may see . . . Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me: Place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unclasp, and set me free. Silently now I wait for Thee, Ready, my God, Thy will to see; Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!”

Review last month’s lesson—Chapters 7 to 8:11 by finding the examples of faith and unbelief and meditating on the two outstanding promises of Jesus: 7:17 and 38.

In chapter 8, the conflict which began in 5:18 after the healing of the impotent man reached a crisis in 8:59. Unbelief is brought out into the open when the Jews picked up stones to throw at Jesus. This was the beginning of violence.

Read the entire section carefully and notice the claims Jesus makes about Himself and also His bold and strong warnings. Pray for grace to believe all that He says is for you and also to heed His warnings.

Chapter 8:12-20 The Testimony of Jesus

1. Notice the word *again* in verse 12. This carries us back to verse 2, where we read that Jesus came into the temple, sat down and began to teach. The woman caught in adultery was brought before Him. This naturally interrupted His teaching. But now the case was settled by His searching eyes and the wisdom of His words; both the accusers and the woman had left and Jesus could resume His teaching. What glorious claim did Jesus make regarding Himself at this point? v. 12 (Instead of just copying the verse try to rewrite His Words so that the truth is brought home to you.)

His statements might have caused the Jews to recall such prophetic words as:

Isaiah 42:6b _____

Isaiah 49:6b _____

A recent survey of 1,024 people completed for *Time* magazine (April 1979) by Yankelovich, Skelly & White, Inc., revealed that the usual "sunny view of our nation's affairs has given way to a dark, gloomy, even slightly fearful mood." The poll found that a record high of 77% of those questioned feel things are not going well in this country—that United States is in deep and serious trouble. In a world that is dark, how wonderful to hear Jesus say, "I am the Light of the world." There is a place of light where we can turn to find right answers and hope! How really fortunate we are!

2. Look up Matthew 16:24 and 19:21 and write down what you think it means to follow. _____
3. What does the Word "darkness" mean? I John 1:6, I Thessalonians 5:4 _____
4. What is the meaning of the promise "shall have the light of life"? II Corinthians 4:6; I Peter 2:9 Meditate on these promises for yourself. _____

5. What does Jesus say about His origin in this section? _____

6. What does He claim about the reliability of His testimony (v. 16)? Compare 5:19 and 30 _____

7. Copy the portion of the law of Moses Jesus referred to here—Deuteronomy 19:15b _____

8. What does v. 19 teach about the way to the Father? _____

Chapter 8:21-30 The Warning of Jesus.

9. What is the clear, sober warning of Jesus in this section? (vs. 21-24) Other Scriptures which have this same truth are Proverbs 1:28, 29, Matthew 25:10-13, Luke 13:24-27, Hebrews 6:4-8 and 10:26-31. These should be studied very prayerfully. It is not harsh or unkind to speak of hell and future punishment. The One who warns here is our kind Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep. _____

10. How wide is the difference between Christ and the ungodly? (v. 23) _____

11. How does v. 28 prove He was more than a man? _____

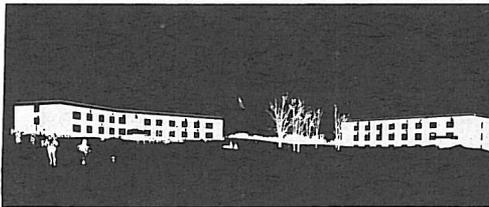
Chapter 8:31-59 The Jews Disputing with Jesus.

12. How could they or any of us be His true disciples? (vs. 31, 32) _____

It is clear that though these verses state that Jesus spoke to "Jews who had believed Him," this believing was not faith that saves the soul. These were the same Jews to whom He said later, "You are of your father the devil." (v. 44)

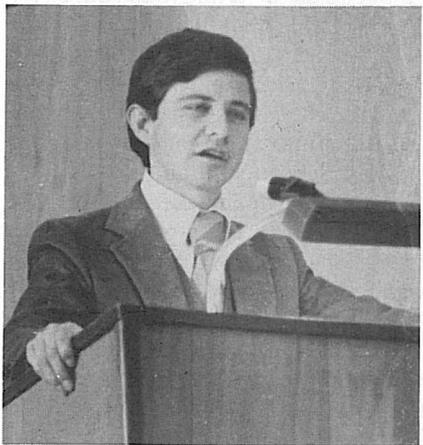
13. Why did these Jews seek to kill Jesus? _____

- v. 37 _____
- v. 42 _____
- v. 43 _____
- v. 44 _____
- v. 45 _____
- v. 55 _____



CAMPUS NEWS

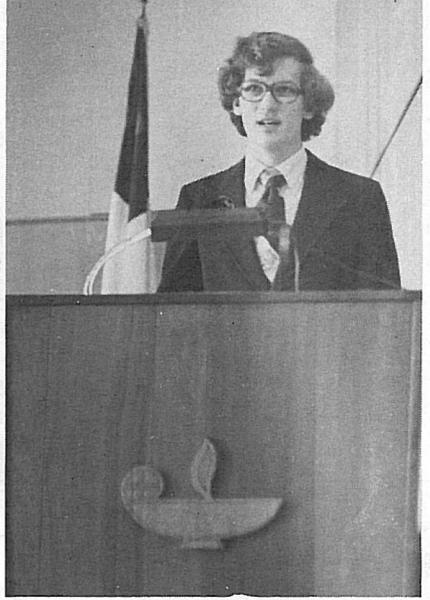
Missions Week



Edmundo Hassenteufel, seminarian.



Rebekka Palmer, daughter of Del and Karen Palmer, and Tom Baker, seminarian, attended the International Dinner served by S. A. Sidhom.



Harold Voth, president of AFLBS Mission Club.

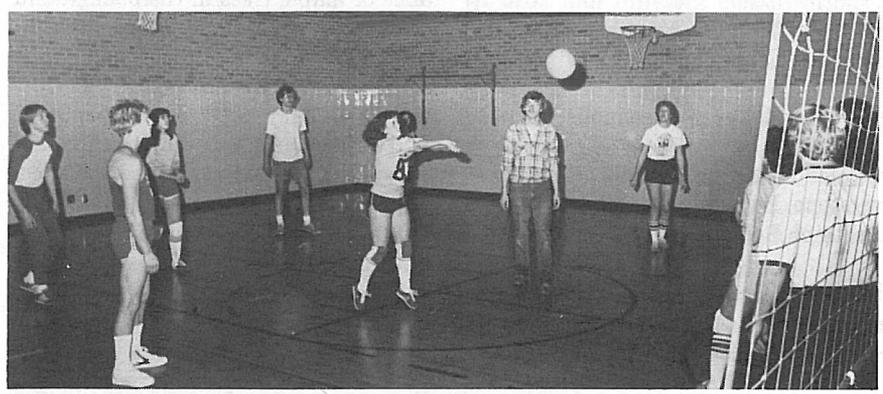
**“Occupy
till I
come”**

“Occupy till I come,” was the theme for AFLC Schools’ Mission Week. During the week of January 18-23, students were challenged from God’s Word through messages from: Pastor Elden Nelson; Mr. Theodore Manaen; Pastors Dasari and Snipstead, who had recently returned from India; Pastor Yeddo Gottel, and Seminarian Edmundo Hassenteufel. Miss Cindy Alpert and others shared and showed slides during the week.

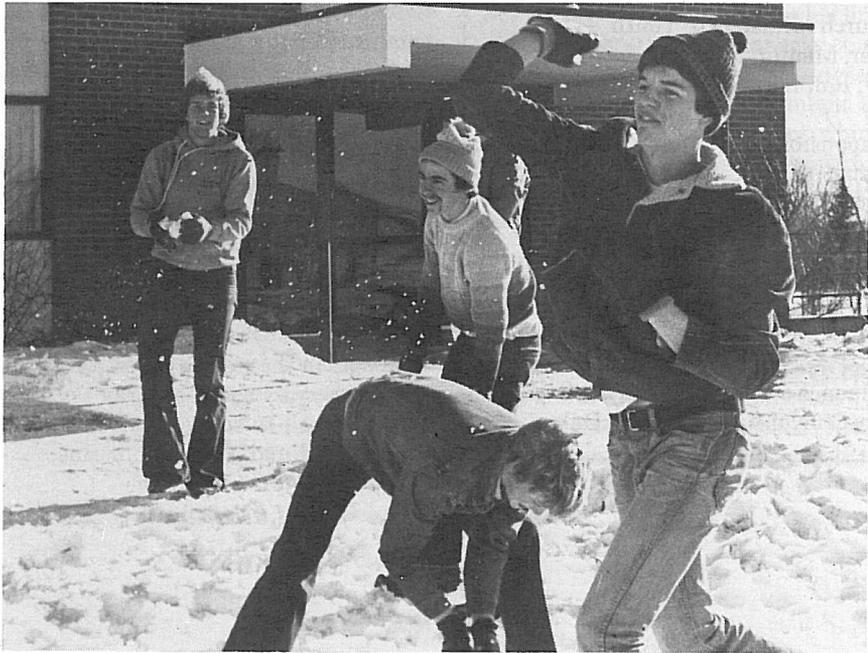
The sessions found a “missionary motivation” to go and serve. Missions begin at home, then abroad. God will guide and empower for the mission field into which He leads every one of His children.

“Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest” (John 4:35b).

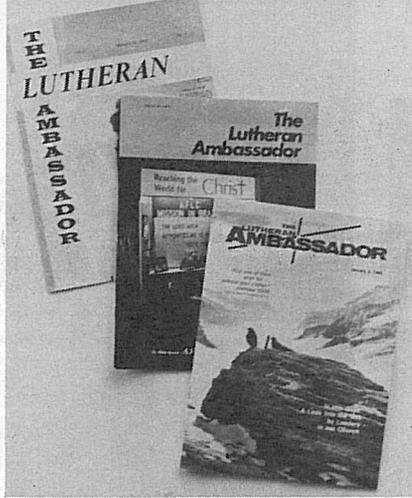
—Arlin Aasness



Thursday recreation nights are spent at a nearby elementary school gym. Between basketball and volleyball practice sessions, co-ed recreation often is a volleyball game played just for fun.



A warm Sunday afternoon provided a great opportunity for Gerald Tweet, Keith Kinnenberg, Mark Molstre and Jerry Moan, to join in on a soggy snow war.



Our Changing
Look
1963-1969
1970-1979
1980-

Eben Junction church visualized Christmas

On December 16, the Calvary Lutheran Church of Eben Jct., Mich., held its Sunday School Christmas program. Because its presentation was unique to us, we'd like to tell our sister congregations about it.

In the fall, some of our teachers had the idea of taking slides of local scenes that would lend themselves to making the Christmas story come alive to our Sunday School children.

Under the capable direction of Mrs. Elvira Stephens the program began to take shape in October. The costuming was taken care of by Mrs. Mavis Tenneboe and Mrs. Helen Woimanen. This was a big task, as you can imagine. Can you picture a large group of students walking down a trail to Bethlehem in obedience to Caesar Augustus' proclamation? The peculiar thing about the scene was the appearance of maple trees in the background in contrast to desert scenes in Israel.

Our talented photographers were Mr. and Mrs. Waino Rajala. They arranged to take pictures of shepherds (with their staffs) watching a flock of sheep. Scenes filmed showed the angel appearing to the shepherds and saying, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people."

When Mrs. Rajala passed by a farm in the area she saw a donkey in the yard. This was a great discovery. She received the owner's permission to take pictures of "Mary" riding the donkey, with "Joseph" leading it.

A neighbor woman who had a month-old baby boy offered to let him represent Baby Jesus. Although we had several students portray Mary, the baby was a picture of happiness no matter who held him. To keep the baby out of the stable, a large doll was placed in the crib.

The Christmas program didn't end with Christ's birth. The Wise Men came in about two years to bring Jesus gifts to honor Him. Of course, He was no longer in the stable. Later, a picture of a large cross against a gray sky was shown for all to see to remind us how He suffered and died for our sins.

continued on p. 16

The Lutheran Ambassador

AFLC WINTER BIBLE CONFERENCE

February 13-16

Sunnyside Lutheran Church, Stacy, Minnesota
Wendell Johnson, Pastor

THEME: THE CHURCH IN GOD'S PLAN

Wednesday, Feb. 13

8:00 p.m. Evening Service—Rev. Wallace Jackson,
Wallace, S. Dak.

Thursday, Feb. 14

9:15 a.m. Devotions
9:30-10:30 a.m. Bible Study—Rev. Ralph Rokke, Minneapolis, Minn.
10:30-11:30 Coffee Break
11:00-12:00 Lecture: "The Enemies of the Church"
Rev. Philip Featherstone, Pukwana, S. Dak.
2:00-3:00 p.m. Bible Study—Rev. Ralph Rokke
3:00-3:30 Coffee Break
3:30-4:30 Lecture: "The Church in Worship"—Mr. Donald
Rodvold, Minneapolis
8:00 p.m. Evening Service—Rev. Wallace Jackson

Friday, Feb. 15

9:15 a.m. Devotions
9:30-10:30 Bible Study—Rev. Ralph Rokke
10:30-11:00 Coffee Break
11:00-12:00 Lecture: "The Church Ministers to Youth"—
Rev. Bruce Dalager, Mentor, Minn.
2:00 3:00 p.m. Bible Study—Rev. Ralph Rokke
3:00-3:30 Coffee Break
3:30-4:30 Lecture: "The Responsibility of Church Members"—
Mr. Ernest Miedema, Valley City, N. Dak.
4:00 p.m. WMF Workshop meeting
8:00 p.m. Evening Service—Rev. Wallace Jackson

Saturday, Feb. 16

9:15 a.m. Devotions
9:30-10:30 Bible Study—Rev. Ralph Rokke
10:30-11:00 Coffee Break
11:00-12:00 Lecture: "The Influence of the Church in Society"—
Lay Pastor Rodney Stueland, Buxton, N. Dak.



MISSOURI SYNOD RECEIVES REPORT ON EUTHANASIA

St. Louis—Euthanasia (mercy killing) is “contrary to God’s Law,” but a Christian in good conscience may “let nature take its course.”

In essence, that is the finding of a report on euthanasia issued last fall by The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod’s Commission on Theology and Church Relations. The report was assigned to the CTCR by the Synod’s 1967 Convention.

The report explains that a Christian may “let nature take its course . . . when the God-given powers of the body to sustain its own life can no longer function and doctors in their professional judgment conclude that there is no real hope for recovery even with life-support instruments.” It also points out that there is forgiveness from God for those who later feel that they might have made a wrong decision in this regard.

At the end of the 32-page report, after sections which define terms and speak to the theological focus of the issue, are twelve guiding principles drawn from those two sections.

These principles are offered as “guidelines for working one’s way through the vast array of ethical questions raised not only by the very speed of advances made in the technology of medicine but also by forces at work in our culture which tend to relativize all moral considerations as they apply to the central issues of life.”

The concluding principles are as follows:

1. Euthanasia, in its proper sense, is a synonym for mercy killing, which involves suicide and/or murder. It is, therefore, contrary to God’s law.
2. As Creator, God alone knows with certainty whether a disease or an injury is incurable.
3. When the God-given powers of the body to sustain its own life can no longer function and doctors in their professional judgment conclude that there is no real hope for recovery even with life-support instruments, a Christian may in good conscience “let nature take its course.” (An explanation notes that the patient, the doctor, the nearest of kin and the pastor should normally be involved in the final decision.)
4. Administering pain-killing medications, even at the risk of shortening life, is permissible, since this does not entail the choice of death as either a means or an end.
5. It is good ethical procedure for the doctor to request and receive a statement signed by the patient, if competent to consent, or by the nearest of kin, agreeing to the uselessness of further “heroic efforts” and consenting to termination of treatments.
6. Each person, no matter how infirm and socially useless he may appear to be, deserves to be accepted as a being created in the image of God.
7. While suffering is an intrusion into life, it provides the opportunity for Christian witness and service.
8. Often the time prior to death is so wrapped in mystery that no one ought forcibly to interrupt the movement of man’s spirit as it may be communicating through God’s Spirit with his Creator and Redeemer by way of responding in trust and inner yearning.
9. Death is not merely a physical but a crucial spiritual event for each person.
10. Any decisions made in this highly complex area, and any actions taken that may later appear to have been wrong, have been redeemed by that forgiveness which is available to all who put their trust in the work and merits of mankind’s Savior and Redeemer.
11. The spiritual and moral questions raised by the issue of euthanasia are of such a nature that their evaluation is an enterprise touching on the very survival of the Christian faith and the survival of our cultural heritage. They constitute the primary spiritual and moral crucible of this age.
12. Christians are obligated to make their position known, by whatever means possible, as a way of helping to shape public opinion on the question of euthanasia.

In a cover letter to the study, Synod President J. A. O. Preus notes, “there is hardly a family in our church body that has not had to wrestle with the issues of death and dying that are discussed in this report, and even more of us will be faced with decisions in this area in the future. I believe that you will find this study, together with the guiding principles, . . . most helpful as you confront such difficult and complex questions as ‘pulling the plug,’ ‘right to die’ legislation, and the use of heroic measures in prolonging life.

“It is my prayer,” Preus concludes, “that this document will be of assistance to the members of our Synod as they are forced to make life and death decisions in ‘the storm-center’ of the biomedical revolution in which we find ourselves.” †

(Ed. note: The report summarized above is well thought of in Lutheran circles. See also the article “Euthanasia” on page 3.)

LUTHERAN UNITY COMMITTEE CITES STRUCTURAL OPTIONS

Milwaukee (LC) Representatives of three Lutheran groupings participating in a Committee on Lutheran Unity have reduced from six to four the number of structural options for a possible church of the future.

At sessions here, the representatives of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, American Luther-

PRAY AMERICA

May the God who can hear our pleas before they are spoken, strengthen every one of us to live and die in trusting communion with Him, so that now, in our humiliation and prayer service across this continent, a mighty host of blood-bought, Spirit-born men and women may repeat the disciples' plea, "Lord, teach us to pray," dedicate themselves to a penitent prayer-life, and daily realize what privilege, what power, what blessing, is theirs in prayer! So pray, America, come to Christ and pray penitently! Pray confidently! Pray constantly! Pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of man, our Savior and Substitute, our Prophet, Priest, and King, our Lord and our God! Amen.

—Walter A. Maier

World news . . .

an Church and Lutheran Church in America eliminated the concepts of a "federation" of the existing churches or of a single, merged church with 60-80 regional subdivisions.

If their parent church bodies agree, congregations of the churches will consider the merits of the four options during a nationwide consultation process which would be initiated next October.

Eben Junction . . .

In closing, an altar picture from our old church was filmed showing Jesus ascending into heaven to reign with His Father, Almighty God.

Although we used a few actual pictures of the Bethlehem area, the filming done locally gave children in grades 3 through 7 an experience in portraying God's Word that they are unlikely to forget.

We, too, can say, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men" for the privilege we Sunday School teachers have of instructing God's Word to children. Praise the Lord!

—Harry Johnson

(Ed. note: Several of our Sunday Schools used this type of approach last Christmas. We are sure they added a new dimension to the portrayal of the wonderful Christmas message.)

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minn. 55441

Second-class postage
paid at Minneapolis, Minn.

The four options now getting prime consideration, it was agreed by the committee, actually present two basic choices: the retention of existing structures or the creation of a new national church. If the choice is a new church, three types of organizational models are presented for examination and debate.

Church bodies participating in the current talks represent the majority of U.S. Lutheranism. The large, 2.6 million member Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, however, is not taking part in the discussions.

In addition to defining the four structural options, the unity committee concluded that there are three primary areas of authority and responsibility which must be assigned to any new national church. They were listed as:

Adoption of a confessional statement; including, disciplining and excluding of congregations and clergy and also lay professionals (though some committee members objected to the reference to lay professionals), and entering into relationships with national and international ecclesiastical, governmental and non-governmental bodies.

A booklet describing the options, suggesting criteria for evaluating structural alternatives, and including a brief theological paper on the nature of the church, will be ready for distribution to congregations in October, assuming approval of the church body conventions. AELC and LCA conventions are scheduled for June and the ALC for October.

Though subject to further revision when the committee next meets—March 3-5 in New York City—the four options currently look like this:

1) Retain present structures of the AELC, ALC and LCA while seeking to extend areas of cooperation, coordination and joint work. This option assumes that Lutheran unity can be evidenced apart from structural union.

2) Form a new national church with the AELC, ALC and LCA becoming nongeographic entities. Proponents say this could provide a more visible unity while retaining the identities and strengths of the existing church bodies.

3) Establish a new national church comprised of several strong regional, geographic entities. Regional units, each with approximately 1,800 congregations, would have major responsibility for decisions regarding mission in their areas.

4) Unite the AELC, ALC and LCA into a national church which would create geographic entities. This option places greater responsibility with the national church.

Committee members worked hard to assure that the options, or types, presented a spectrum of models for consideration. They recognized that some participating in the consultation process may prefer features blending two or more options.

While the committee's task is to draft reasonable options, and not debate their merits, it was obvious from discussion here that a decision to form a new church—no matter which model—would necessitate extensive negotiation on many polity issues. †