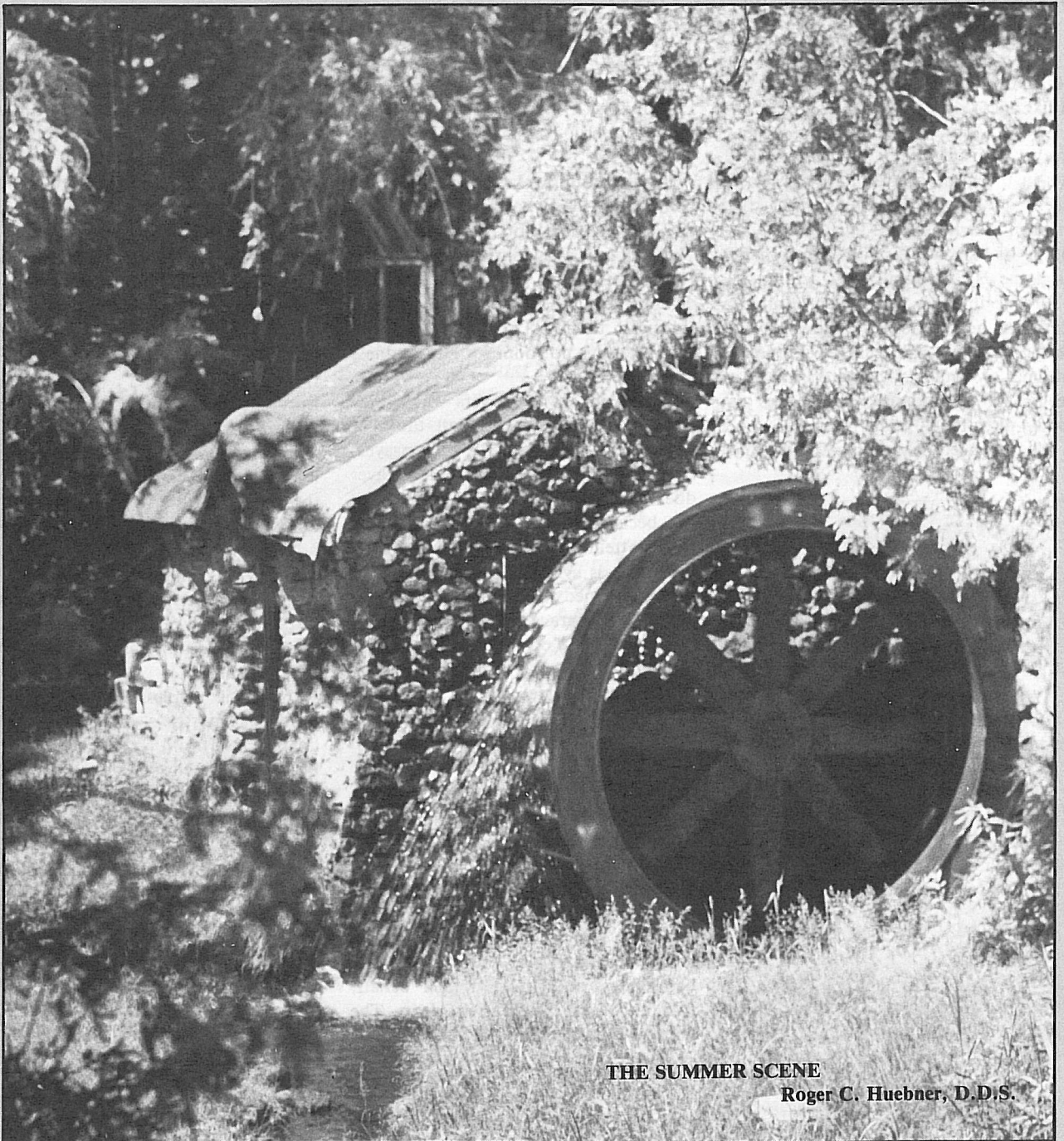


THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

June 22, 1982

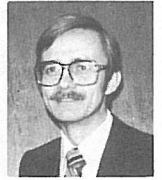


THE SUMMER SCENE

Roger C. Huebner, D.D.S.

AT THE MASTER'S FEET

Rev. Bruce Dalager



Prayer: More than words

"... One of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us how to pray! ...'" (Luke 11:1).

Prayer is more than speaking words. Prayer is an attitude of the heart that exists in the heart before the words have been spoken and remains after the "Amen" has been said. Prayer is the attitude of "seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

Prayer involves, first of all, an attitude of helplessness. Whether we are facing our sin, a physical or emotional trauma, or want to give thanks, it is our feeling of dependance that moves us God's direction to pray.

All men need help. Some know it and

show it. Others, by their living or know-it-all attitude, give evidence of not knowing it. Only those who know it can receive the true blessings that come with God's care.

It is through His intercession on behalf of the helpless that God demonstrates His glory, grace and love. The helpless can confidently come to Him because he delights in demonstrating His character to and through them. The arrogant and haughty leave no room for His kindness and grace.

Those who utter prayers which they think are less eloquent than those of others need never feel that their prayers are second-rate. Eloquence in prayer does not move God. Brokenness does; not because it is a quality that merits God's attention and obligates Him, but because it is evidence of a heart that is finally resigned to the will and work of God. God's grace will operate where resistance and opposition have been broken down.

There are people who are so helpless that they cannot utter a prayer. Such should remember that God hears even when their spirit cries out. Even before they call, He will answer. He knows if they want His grace. I have stood at the bedside of some such people who were so sick they could not audibly cry out to God. Neither could some of them gather their thoughts enough to compose a prayer in their minds. Yet, when they heard someone else enter into their helplessness and pray on their behalf, real peace settled over their spirits. The helpless ones need intercessors.

Even though the Christian may be stricken so that he cannot utter or think a prayer, even though he might have to face such a condition alone without a visitor, he can be assured now, that though such could be his situation he has a high priest who relates to his need, knows his need and intercedes on his behalf. This assurance is a comfort also for the one whose sins loom so large before him that he is afraid he cannot pray to a holy God. Remember the words of Jesus to Peter, which very likely influenced him after he had denied his Lord, "I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail" (Luke 22:32).

Another statement of Christ reassures us in our helplessness. When we realize the truth of "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5), we will expect nothing of ourselves, we will get our eyes off ourselves, and we will cast ourselves solely upon the mercy of God. We will rest in the knowledge that if we are to be anything or do anything God must do the providing.

Prayer is helplessness coupled with faith. Helplessness without faith is despair. Though the feeling of helplessness seems to dominate and at times almost overwhelms faith, a truly prayerful attitude believes that God wants to offer His grace. When God reveals Himself through the great promises made to those in need, the flickering fire of faith must burn with renewed vigor.

May God grant us helplessness and faith.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Volume 20 Number 13

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The President's Message to the Church

The first of two parts

To the 20th Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations assembled at Dickinson, North Dakota, June 16-20, 1982.

Grace and Peace!

I greet you in the Name of our Lord Jesus, our Lord and Savior. In the opening of our Conference may we be in earnest prayer that our Heavenly Father would send us His Holy Spirit to lead and guide us in all our deliberations as we seek to build His Church and advance His kingdom.

In a day when the Church is confronted with increasing challenges, how good it is to be reminded of the words of our Lord from Matthew 16:18, "Upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Let us also be mindful of the words of the Psalmist in all of our considerations, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psalm 127:1).

Twentieth Anniversary

This Conference marks the 20th anniversary of our fellowship. May our Conference be permeated with the "sacrifices of praise to God" for His blessings. Surely God has been building His Church in our midst during these two decades. We marvel at how quickly

time has slipped from us. A greater marvel is surely what has grown from the insignificant beginnings of 1962.

Our last Annual Conference called on our Board of Parish Education and Publications to prepare a book to commemorate the occasion of our twentieth anniversary. This board is to be commended for the fine work that has been done on this anniversary book. It is entitled *Beginnings and Blessings*. It will be a keepsake in many homes of our AFLC people.

The Conference last year also called for a special anniversary offering to be received this year. Bulletin inserts have been mailed to all our congregations and articles have also appeared in *The Lutheran Ambassador* informing us about the special anniversary thank offering. Proceeds from the offering will go to the establishment of an orphanage in India and for debt retirement at home.

We shall be commemorating this 20th anniversary at our Conference this year with a coffee hour this afternoon. Special gifts and offerings can be presented at that time for the projects designated.

A World in Need

We meet in the quiet midwestern city of Dickinson, North Dakota, where there are signs of prosperity and progress. It is so easy for us to forget that our world is now facing unmatched global concerns. Men's hearts are gripped by fear and uncertainty. We have seen a recession in our land, but fear of a recession and even a depression has now become world-wide. The fear of war has intensified in recent weeks. We have seen the realities of war come to our Western Hemisphere in the Falkland crisis. The hostilities in Central America are cause for deep concern among us. The land of Poland is torn with unrest. Communist authorities have been forced to impose martial law to quell the unrest. The Middle East is always an explosive situation. Afghan guerillas have organized to wage war to the death in an effort to rid their nation of the Red enemy.

In our own nation, all of us are concerned about the threat of nuclear war. Our President feels that this nation must regain strategic parity in the arms race. Surely, there is none among us that does not desire world peace, and political and religious freedom for all.

Recent weeks have produced numerous statements by church leaders for a nuclear arms freeze. Many attended the Moscow Peace Congress sponsored by the Russian Orthodox Church in May. We would like to express our concern to church leaders who take such steps that we do not provide propaganda for the Soviet bloc.

The Bible declares, "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. 13:14). Surely, the Church in this day needs to be "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." As Christians, our primary task is to bear witness to the Gospel, bringing the saving message of Jesus to all the world. This is ever to have priority in the kingdom work.

We have had increasing support for World Relief this past year. We need to continue, and to increase those efforts. Seventy million people will starve to death in our world this year. Four hundred million people will suffer from chronic malnutrition. Fully one billion don't get enough to eat. Forecasts suggest the number of "hungry people" may double by the year 2000.

The problem is partially one of distribution. Some of us have an abundance, while others are among the "have-nots." We in the United States constitute only five percent of the world's population, but we consume over 40% of the resources. The problem is also one of heart concern, and willingness to do something to help.

Our United States

US News and World Report predicts that Americans will spend more than 105 billion dollars on pleasure activities this year. That is an increase of 100% in ten years. We are a nation preoccupied with pleasure.

The incessant pursuit of self-gratification has led to drastic increases in divorce and a growing rejection of marriage. If our nation is to survive this decade, the Church must so effectively proclaim the teachings of Christ that the tide of moral decay may be stemmed. The Church must convey to all its people and especially to those who contemplate marriage that the responsibility of maintaining family values and stability rests squarely on each parent. We would urge the members of our congregations and parents to join hands in a concerted effort to strengthen family life and restore

[Continued on page 4]



by Pastor

Richard Snipstead

MESSAGE . . .

Biblical values to our homes. As it begins in our homes it can then also spread out to others.

In the early '70s, futurists predicted that the "traditional" family would largely be replaced with alternative family structures by the end of the eighties. Today there are evidences of partial fulfillment. Feminist groups openly advocate their goal of destroying the family unit. If the ERA passes, distinctive reference to men and women will be replaced by neuter gender terms. When a hand no longer rocks the cradle, then who will rule the world?

Violent crime rose by 11 percent last year in the United States. One out of every three American households will be affected by crime in 1982. Every ten seconds a burglary occurs, every seven minutes a rape, every 24 minutes a murder. We put a higher percentage of our population in prison than any other nation, except the Soviet Union and South Africa. Nothing seems to stop this surge of lawlessness. God has given us the remedy, but the conditions must be met by God's people. "If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (II Chron. 7:14). The healing does not come. It is not because God's promise has changed. We need to pray for revival in our churches and throughout all America.

A recent editorial in our daily newspaper caught my attention. It pointed out that in America more people drive the automobile than vote. The automobile is a vehicle of self-expression as well as transportation. The editorial pointed out that drunk drivers butcher Americans much faster than the Vietnam War did. Drunk drivers cost society five billion dollars each year in court time, rehabilitation, lost earnings and other expenses. The editorial pointed out that the public has reacted to polio, is alarmed over violent crimes and handguns, but has not been comparably aroused by the fact that a life is lost every 21 minutes in an alcohol-related crash. One out of every two Americans will eventually be involved in an alcohol-related crash. Newspapers editorialize about the dangers of commercial nuclear power plants (which have killed no one),

but openly advertise liquor.

In some of our states efforts are being made to enact stiffer laws against drunk drivers. We would urge our people to give their entire support to such efforts.

High interest rates plague the marketing of many products. Unemployment continues to rise to new highs. The people of the AFLC are largely a fellowship of congregations serving rural America. We must express our concern today over the critical situation that faces agriculture. High interest rates and low commodity prices make it extremely difficult for our young men to go into farming. Even established farmers are being forced to sell out and look for other employment. Our church body will be hard hit if there is not a dramatic reversal in economic conditions.

President Reagan has suggested that the private sector pick up the slack in caring for the poor and aged, caused by the phase-out of various federal programs. There are reports of increasing hunger in our major cities in America. Bread lines have increasingly larger numbers. We in our AFLC must ask ourselves how we shall respond to these needs. The congregations in inner city situations may already be feeling the challenge, but the needs of the old, the poor and the underprivileged ought to be the responsibility of each of us.

The Religious Trends About Us

Twenty years ago the AFLC was born because a number of Lutheran Free Church people did not want to become involved in the merger with several other Lutheran bodies. The years have not diminished our concerns, nor have they changed our convictions.

The American Lutheran Church, formed by the merger of 1961, (the LFC merged in 1963) is presently involved in merger discussions with two other Lutheran bodies, namely, the Lutheran Church in America and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Congregations. A single proposal for unity will be presented to concurrent September, 1982, conventions of the three bodies. The new church, bringing together roughly 5.5 million Lutherans, will be formed in 1987.

The merger of Luther Theological Seminary (ALC) and Northwestern Theological Seminary (LCA) is set for July 1, 1982. It will be known as Luther Northwestern Seminary.

The Lutheran Church in America may also adopt a statement of unequivocal commitment to ecumenism at its September meeting. The statement would commit LCA to "reach out in several directions simultaneously, to all groups in the ecumenical world with which it may find agreement in the Gospel . . . Ecumenism must permeate every aspect of this church's faith and life," declared LCA Bishop Crumley.

The teachings of the Bible continue to be challenged by humanistic philosophy that asserts that man's own reason and efforts are man's best and only hope. People are led away from dependence upon God and taught to rely only on human resourcefulness to solve problems. Even more alarming than the humanistic philosophy itself is the realization of how secular values have already permeated the Church. The self-seeking, individualistic, materialistic values of secular culture can be found everywhere. We have it in the success gospel, in self-actualization psychology and in the self-preoccupied focus of some Christian music. The challenge that we find from Christ in the Bible is rather that we recognize our self-seeking values and take up our cross and follow Him daily.

Within our AFLC

The past year has been a very good year for our AFLC. We have experienced God's blessings in so many ways. Reports come of souls brought to Christ and believers being renewed. New congregations have been added to our fellowship and a number of our established congregations have experienced good growth. It has been good to see congregations improving old sanctuaries and also erecting new houses of worship.

Three regional Midwinter Bible Conferences were held last year. These were times of rich blessing. Conferences were held at Valley City, North Dakota, at the ARC, Osceola, Wisconsin, and at Astoria, Oregon. These conferences afford our people the opportunity to get into the Word and to be enriched and strengthened by Christian fellowship. We need that in the day we live. Plans are to again have three regional conferences next February. The invitation from Thief River Falls has already been accepted for one of these conferences.

Bible camps have been an important factor in summer activities for our

THE LAITY AND THE CHURCH

The church is people. People are the church. The local church is the "right form of the kingdom of God on earth." It is a place of fellowship and service. God's work in the world has many sides. The Holy Spirit has given many gifts of enablement for this work, this service. In this issue of the *Ambassador* six people write about the laity and the church, and the pastors. Working together, in obedience to the Lord, the church will be a sweet savor for Him in the world.

AFLC. We can mention only the family camps here, though we are aware of many district camps and encourage their support. Family camps were held at Lake Bronson and at the ARC last summer. These camps will again offer times of relaxation and spiritual refreshment to our people this summer. It would be good for every family in our AFLC to get away for a few days of family camp.

The Wilderness Camp at Lake Park, Minnesota, will become a reality this year. All permits are finally on hand. A limited number of campers will be able to enjoy a unique type of camping there. The dates for our family camps are as follows:

Lake Bronson, Minnesota, July 12-17
The Wilderness Camp, Lake Park,
Minnesota, July 30-August 1
The ARC, Osceola, Wisconsin,
August 9-15

(To be continued)

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

by Mr. Raymond Jacobson
Wadena, Minn.

We of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations have indeed a goodly heritage. Our forefathers, the founders of the Lutheran Free Church, had as an objective the promoting of spiritual gifts among the laity. Perhaps this distinguished this new church body from the State Church in Norway more than anything. A number of our *Fundamental Principles* which were formulated at the time of our organization point out the importance of encouraging the use of the spiritual gifts in the body of Christ, the church.

Professor Georg Sverdrup, who has properly been called the father of our Lutheran Free Church, was an undaunted advocate of religious lay activity, including public prayer and testimonies. His position was clear and Scriptural, namely: "Witnessing for Christ is the sacred duty of every child of God to whom He has given the needed gifts."

Spiritual gifts are many and varied. None of God's children are excluded from receiving His gifts. J.B. Phillips states it this way, from I Cor. 12:7: "Each man is given his gift by the Spirit that he may make the most of it."

Someone has counted more than 20 different spiritual gifts given to the church, which are mentioned in Scripture. I'm afraid many of us are inclined to think that if we are not capable of public speaking, praying or giving an eloquent testimony of our faith or perhaps singing or teaching, other gifts are of little importance.

All spiritual gifts are important to the work of the church. I don't think God's standard of measurement as to the importance of gifts would necessarily agree with that of man's.

I recall a statement made by the late A.W. Knock of the Lutheran Bible Institute, in discussing degrees of rewards in heaven, which went something like this, "Of all the people I have known in the years of my ministry, in my opinion, none will receive a greater reward than a man who was a custodian in the church I

once served. He was even thought to be rather simple by some. But no one I have ever known was more faithful or conscientious in the performance of his duties than this man." God gave him this gift and he used it.

What about a "shut-in" who seldom has the opportunity of even getting out to mix with the public, but has a genuine burden for the souls of men and is faithful in intercessory prayer for lost mankind. It has been said that the beginning of one of the great spiritual awakenings was traced to a humble invalid lady who possessed such a gift and strove with God in prayer until the "light broke through."

"None of God's children
are excluded from
receiving His gifts."

Barnabas isn't spoken of in Scripture as being a great teacher or an eloquent preacher; but he was a man who had been given the gift of encouragement. It was Barnabas who sought out Paul after his conversion and brought him to the other Apostles to assure them of Paul's genuine conversion and to eliminate any doubt due to his past life (Acts 9:27). Later, when revival broke out in Antioch, it was Barnabas who was sent there to encourage the new converts to remain faithful to their new commitment (Acts 11:22-23). Other incidents are recorded where Barnabas was an encouragement to fellow believers.

A number of Scripture references indicate clearly that all believers have received a gift or gifts for a particular function in the church, Christ's Body (I Pet. 4:10, I Cor. 12:4-11, Rom. 12:6-8).

Dr. Odd Gornitzka brings out this thought so beautifully in his study guide on I Corinthians, and I quote: "In this connection it may help us to keep in mind the figure used in chapter 3:16, 'Ye are a temple of God!' In this temple of God, which is under construction, dwells the Holy Spirit. He is the Divine

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A LAYMAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO HIS CONGREGATION

by Mr. Palmer J. Haugen
Portland, N. Dak.

The *Fundamental Principles* of our Association of Free Lutheran Congregations maintains that "according to the Word of God, the congregation is the right form of the Kingdom of God on earth. The *Principles* further give expression of the need and blessing of true spiritual cooperation within and between congregations to further the kingdom of God.

This belief places great responsibility upon not only the pastor but upon the layman of the congregation. The term "layman" is generally applied to the person who is a nonprofessional whether it be in the field of chemistry, botany, teaching or theology. "Laymen's work," then, means preaching, teaching and all other Christian activity carried on by others than the pastor.

If the church is going to effectively minister the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people, the church has to gain a

sense of mission through all its members to all of the community. To develop the ministry of the laity is essential. It contributes to the personal and effective witnessing of the church. The work of the laity in the church means more than paying for the church buildings and meeting the budget. It means helping more people to understand the grace of God and how this grace gives them freedom in Christ.

The total membership of true believers of a congregation should be put into use as a God-intended working force. Only then will the church members put into practice their Christian calling in all sectors of life and society. As laymen we have to go beyond nominal, passive membership to a spiritually alive, active membership.

This ministry is given by God and is exercised through spontaneous use of special gifts which the Holy Spirit has bestowed on every Christian. The Apostle Paul uses a whole chapter to expand this concept (I Cor. 12).

Above all else, the church is the *called* people of God, a community of believers. Unless the church member has a sense of being called for a mission just where he is every day of his life, he may leave most of his mission to the pastor. This results in the church member hanging up his Christianity in the cloakroom when he goes to work.

"The individual Christian has a mission no one else can perform for him."

No pastor can fulfill the ministry God gave to each believer. Unfortunately, thinking in the church has made the task of the many parishioners the task of a single pastor. The pastor is to labor in God's kingdom not instead of the people but alongside them, not for them, but with them. The individual Christian has a mission no one else can perform for him (Rom. 12:4-6). All share in a common ministry for edification of the church.

As lay people, then, we should remember that the pastor and the church member should labor together in this common ministry in God's kingdom. Christian service is as sacred when performed by a believing layman as when performed by a seminary graduate.

We have too long depended on the sermon alone to do what it cannot fully do. The work of the kingdom is done by *doing*, not by watching and listening only. As lay people we should remember that worship is not something you *attend* but something you *do*. The aim should be not to produce a Sunday morning Christian but an active believer who is able and willing to work as a witness in the society in which he lives.

Teaching and preaching are not

GIFTS...

Architect with all the plans in His mind. He, at any period of the building process, knows what kind of gifts to employ for the good of the work. While a steam shovel is good for digging the basement, it does not mean that the same shovel be used for putting on the ornaments. The same gift, very essential at a certain period, may be of no use in another. We can readily make the application. The gifts of great value in arousing interest and gathering people in a new field may be of comparative little value in an old field where the vital truths of the Gospel are well known. The proper attitude to take as those who are not primarily interested in having a 'good time' spiritually, but in being useful as God's temple builders, would then be to earnestly desire the gifts of the Spirit most needful where they are."

When spiritual gifts are given to the church it is for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, therefore glorifying His name. If the individual to whom

such gifts are given seeks his own glory through the acclaim of man it can only lead to spiritual defeat and dishonor to the name of Christ. We often hear of gifted individuals who began their walk with the Lord in the spirit of humility and were greatly used in the kingdom work, but who in time permitted success and acclaim to go to their heads and began losing out and later had to be put on the shelf because they were of no more use in the church. How tragic!

What a loss to the building of Christ's kingdom on earth when you and I as Christ's own followers aren't exercising the spiritual gifts God has given us in the manner He intended.

In conclusion, may we consider this question. What would the church of Jesus Christ be like if we would all labor together in unity in the spirit of I Cor. 12:26: "And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it?"

THE SECRET

*Here we have the secret of a flourishing Church:
every believer a witness for Jesus. Here we have
the cause of the weakness of the Church:
so few who are willing in daily life to testify
that Jesus is Lord.*

Andrew Murray

A WOMAN'S CONTRIBUTION

by Solveig Hays
Everett, Wash.

enough to produce God-intended results. Church services can be well attended and the annual budget over-subscribed, but without a significant personal and spiritual growth and a real concern of its members for an active work in the Kingdom, the work may become ineffective.

Paul designates certain offices, positions and services to which qualified persons are to be appointed (Titus 1:5; II Tim. 1:9). These positions are given within the context of a diversity of gifts. Paul also warns Timothy against persons who hold to the outward forms of religion but do not exercise its power in their lives, who do not really arrive at a working knowledge of the truth.

Eph. 2:10: "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." "Created in Christ Jesus" means that every child of God is created for a life of service. "Which God hath before ordained" means God has laid the plan for this life of service. "That we should walk in them." Walk is a *practical* word. This means God's great purpose of service for the lives of his children is to be *known* and *lived* out in our present workaday life.

We will not build an active laity if confirmation is a finishing school or if *mere* church attendance is all that is required, or if our belief and faith is only to die by. We must *more than ever* encourage and direct lay people to serve in various activities that are Christ-centered and Spirit-controlled for the building of the congregation and by this for the advancement of God's kingdom on earth. This is necessary if we are to have *living* congregations where the membership in word and deed bears testimony to the outside world of God's saving grace.

God in His infinite wisdom has given each Christian an ability, a talent and a spiritual gift. To some a gift of prophecy, to some a gift of preaching or teaching, to some a gift of helping and encouraging others, etc. (Rom. 12:6-8 and I Cor. 12:7-11).

If every believer exercised his God-given gift, there would be no gaps in the Lord's work. If there is some needed service in the church that is being neglected, it is safe to assume that there are those who are not doing their duty.

Women are *not* called to preach in a formal worship service of the church, they are *not* called to teach men, they are *not* called to have oversight of the church body. But . . . there are many necessary tasks, which can be effective in testimony for Christ, for which women are especially fitted.

Romans 16:12 tells of women who were servants of the church. Christian women had been such a help to the Apostle Paul that they were considered

*" . . . there are many
necessary tasks, which can
be effective testimony for
Christ, for which women are
especially fitted."*

"laborers with him" in the Gospel ministry.

I Timothy 5:5 tells of widows who gave themselves to God in prayer, night and day. What a ministry that is, and now needed today! (See also Lk. 2:36-37.)

Titus 2:3-5 instructs older women to teach younger women to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their husbands, etc.

Acts 12:12 speaks of a woman who opened up her home to church meetings.

James 1:27 says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Acts 9:36-39: Dorcas sewed garments for the widows.

Acts 16:40: Lydia housed and fed God's servants when they worked in her home town.

I Timothy 5:10 lists the things a widow was to do to be considered of good report: bring up children, lodge strangers, relieve the afflicted, diligently follow every good work, etc.

It is true the Bible does not teach that doing good works can save a person's soul or make him fit for heaven . . . only forgiveness through the blood of Jesus can do that!

But God has instructed that these good works are not to be neglected by those who know and love Him.

Titus 3:8: "That they which believed in God might be careful to maintain good works."

Pray that God will give you godly contentment with the gift He has entrusted to you and be ready to use it at any time. Ask God to make you sensitive to the

[Continued on page 8]

CONTRIBUTION . . .

needs of others, and to be one from whom others feel free to receive help.

How long has it been since you offered to house and feed a visiting missionary or evangelist or do you leave it up to the pastor and his wife?

A new family has moved into your neighborhood. How might you help them become acquainted and invite them to church?

A mother is home with a new baby. How might you offer to help entertain other children in the family for a few hours?

One child is hospitalized. How might you help with the other children?

Several of our older church members are in nursing homes. How might you help them? By just being a good listener, writing letters for them and doing errands, etc.

Matthew 25:40: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.'

High on the priority list for a Christian woman should be the teaching of

children. Proverbs 31:1 speaks of King Lemuel as a child being taught by his mother.

The education system of our public schools may disappoint us sometimes. Teachers and administration aren't always a good example for our children.

Children not taught properly at home draw their own conclusions and accept the moral code they see most . . . the ones they get from T.V.

In the Sunday School there is an opportunity to present the claims of Christ to many youngsters at once.

The Christian Sunday School teacher should spend time studying the Bible lessons and praying for each child in her class. She should be an example to the children in her attitudes toward God, toward herself and the children.

Women can be effective and helpful in teaching other women. Who knows the cares, the frustrations, the emotional ups and downs better than another woman? (Titus 2:3-5).

Proverbs 11:32 encourages us as women of our church to use discretion. There is a time to speak and to be silent.

In this day of E.R.A. (Equal Rights Amendment), to some these verses in Titus seem out-of-date and old-fashioned. But nevertheless we cannot overlook or leave out certain portions if we don't agree.

I Corinthians 14:34-35 and I Timothy 2:11-12 express plainly our status or rank in the church. We need to make ourselves aware of our place, our position, our priorities in the church as Christian women. In prayer and in supplication we should make our thoughts known unto Him.

*"If every believer
exercised his God-given
gift, there would be
no gaps in the
Lord's work."*

A LAYMAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO HIS PASTOR

by Kenneth G. Williams
Ishpeming, Mich.

A layman is described in secular terms as "one who is not an expert in some field." For the purpose of Biblical description we shall refer to the picture drawn by the apostle Paul in I Tim. 3:1-13 and Titus 2:1-2. Here we see a host of attributes descriptive of lay people in general and specifically of laymen.

As we examine the layman's role and support position behind the pastor it would seem imperative that he first of all must be available. In the process of "building a church" the Lord designed vessels "fit, meet, and right" to be incorporated into the scheme of construction. If these vessels are withheld and

not made available to the pastor (project engineer), then a void exists which cannot be filled by any other means because the Lord made no provision for it.

Having then been made available the next attribute of a layman would be faithfulness. All too often the agreement to serve has not been accompanied by day in, day out steadfastness. The keystone of a building arch must be present at all times in order to maintain the arch support. So, too, the continuing presence of the layman guarantees the support rightfully expected by the pastor.

Respect and humility would go hand in hand. The layman must be humble enough to have respect for his pastor. Age difference, status of the layman, etc., may be stumbling blocks that need to be set aside in order to establish a climate in which the pastor is accorded the proper respect.

Certainly the layman should be possessed of a loyal heart, not a heart of blind obedience, but one tempered with the wisdom of the Scriptures. Who is above reproach? Not even the pastor. Thus it behooves the layman to be able to profit according to II Tim. 3:16-17. "All scripture is given by inspiration of

God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

In the course of a good working relationship a gentle spirit would seem an absolute necessity. In the everyday workings of people "rubbing" together, the "enemy" will be seeking any advantage, stirring up division, strife, etc. Occasion may give rise to ire. However, here the gentle spirit serves its purpose. Prov. 15: 1: "A soft answer turneth away wrath."

As we examine the role, posture and being of the layman it immediately becomes apparent how necessary a working knowledge of the Scriptures is to create a bond between pastor and layman that can withstand the onslaught of the world. "But the greatest of these is love" (I Cor. 13:13b). The "way of love," then, incorporated in the bonding

*"The layman must be
humble enough to have
respect for his pastor."*

editorials

THE LAITY AND THE CHURCH

This issue of the *Ambassador* is unique because never have we featured so many lay writers in a series, at least in a general area and not just in one facet of the church's work, as Parish Education, for example.

We have assembled seven writers, only one of them an ordained pastor, to share their thoughts and convictions about their role and the pastor's role in the church. They come from widely scattered areas of the church and also from several walks of life, and all of them with many years of experience with the Lord Jesus Christ and service in His Church.

The AFLC is a church which believes in an educated clergy but does not shun the using of mature and gifted lay pastors either. The Association, furthermore, has a history of encouragement for lay activity in the churches. Two of the *Fundamental Principles* address the subject specifically. No. 6 declares: "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."

No. 8, in speaking of the fellowship existing *among* the congregations, lists *lay activities* as one area which enhances and manifests that fellowship.

Our six writers are writing about the life of the laity in the congregation, what avenues of service are open to them, really what it means to be a member of a Christian congregation. The pastor as shepherd of the flock (congregation) comes under discussion, too, as one writer considers the expectations a lay person has of his pastor and another looks at the laity's responsibility to its pastor. And to get a voice from the other side, a pastor shares some ideas about what he likes to find in his parishioners.

One more thing. Works and service in the church, the congregation, call it what you will, are possible because the Lord enables them, gives gifts so that they become a fact. Still another writer sets forth a right understanding of the "spiritual gifts."

What is presented today under this series is long overdue. We hope it will all prove a blessing and a help to a more fruitful life together.

process (as it is outlined in I Cor. 13), would be the most exemplary attribute. Love does find a way for all situations. Perhaps the idea of love in this context bruises the male ego and makes strong men timid. Jesus in His male position as the Son of God loved as He instructed us to love, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

The pastor at various times in the course of his ministry will be confronted with burdens, periods of depression, defeats, setbacks, discouragements and moments when things are not as rosy as he would like them to be. There may be times when situations arise which require the wisdom of more than one person's experience. The pastor may have a helpmate to turn to and unburden himself, but this merely, at times, continues the problem within the family unit.

In the above cited instances the layman can be a source not only of wisdom but also comfort and strength. Yes, someone who can help absorb the shock when the pastor finds he is only human after all. Many times the need for a receptive ear is felt. A layman who is practiced in the ways of confidentiality as well as loyalty will be able to be used

as a sounding board, one with whom to talk out problems, acting as a steady influence, as well as helping to drive away doubts, fears and anxieties. We all know that feeling of being down and then having the opportunity to meet that one person who can offer not only sympathy and compassion but also one who is possessed of the practical mind, able to grapple with problems and suggest solutions. Here we receive that "shot in the arm" that picks us up. The pastor needs to be able to rely on one or more of his laymen to help him through such situations. In all of this let us not forget that we are only God's vessels and a praying layman would be ready to look to Jesus in everything. We would not be a substitute for God but a ready, willing and available servant.

The Apostle Paul, in his Second Letter to Timothy, makes reference to Demas who fell away, deserting Paul, drawn by his love for the pleasures of the world. Paul also makes reference to Mark in this letter. The words should be applicable to laymen in God's service. "... bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry." Would to God, then, that we present ourselves as layman profitable for the ministry.

**Would to God,
then, that we present
ourselves as laymen
profitable for the
ministry.**



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.

MINNESOTA

Roseau

Mr. Selvin Erickson, 72, May 17, Rose

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A PASTOR

by Eldor Sorkness
Sand Creek, Wis.

As I have thought about the assignment, I fully realize that it is not easy and there is a chance for misunderstanding.

I will refer a number of times to writings of Professor Georg Sverdrup's (*Samlede Skrifter*), written in the Norwegian language as gathered by his son, Professor George Sverdrup, Jr., and Professor Andreas Helland.

I thank God for the most wonderful fellowship and friendship that I have had with my own pastors and with many other pastors. My church background is the Lutheran Free Church and the AFLC.

As I think of a pastor, his wife and family in some respects may have a rather lonesome life and may carry many burdens alone, as it may be hard to discuss them with individuals in the congregation. To analyze self is the hardest of all and may be where both lay people and pastors have failed at times. On a board, if one member goes off center, the others most likely will not follow, but the pastor stands alone. If the pastor does seek to confer with a member, it may be a "yes or no person" and he may get a distorted picture of the true affairs in the congregation. All of us need to pray for wisdom and we have a promise of it (James 1:5 and many other places in Scripture).

The pastor is called of God. The call is to one who has a living experience of salvation (Sverdrup, Vol. 2, page 238), who, when led by the Holy Spirit, brings a balanced message, as referred to in the *Fundamental Principles*, No. 4. Sverdrup (Vol. 2, page 241) speaks of dead and living preaching, the latter, in other words, preaching with an application. I still recall a pastor we had many years ago. He often said, "This is how it applies to me," and it always applied to the rest of us also. Sverdrup (Vol. 2, page 211) refers to unchristian preaching as giving pillows to the people so they will sleep in sin, and the congregation will or can die spiritually. What a challenge both to the pastor and Christian lay peo-

ple to pray for wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The congregation needs the pastor's leadership. He is God's appointed man, who is called by the congregation. Sverdrup (Vol. 2, page 71) uses the example of the pastor and the congregation as husband and wife. This is a wonderful picture of the pastor and the congregation working in God's vineyard to the growth in sanctification of the individual Christians and that souls will be born into the kingdom. As the pastor is called to the congregation, the question is asked: Is the pastor called as the lord or the servant of the congregation? The opinion is given that the extreme of both is wrong and that the picture of a husband and wife is more true to God's Word, that both will be led by the Spirit of God in love to serve, that both the pastor and the Christians will grow in sanctification and souls come to saving knowledge and a personal relationship to God.

The lay people in a congregation need the encouragement of the pastor in developing lay activity. Sverdrup (Vol. 2, page 72) refers to Eph. 4:11-12 and Acts 6:6 and 20:28. It is one of the *Fundamental Principles* of the AFLC, No. 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." The laymen are not to take the pastor's place, but at times to fill in when the pastor is elsewhere and as the Spirit of God leads. I Peter 2:5-9, says every Christian is called of God to be a living witness of God's redeeming grace.

The Bible states that if the young Christian does not feed on God's Word so that there may be spiritual growth, the spiritual life can starve to death. May I use my own testimony as an example. I was a young Christian who had come to saving faith at age 20. The next spring there were held meetings at various homes, conducted by the pastor and

laymen. At the service an opportunity for testimonies was given. A voice came to me, keep still, you have nothing worthwhile to say, which from one point was true. I knew later this was Satan's logical voice. Then layman John Hoel, who was leading the meeting, said, "Eldor have you nothing to say for Jesus." By the grace of God, I was able to say that I still loved the Lord and wanted to live for him. I thank God for the Spirit-led laymen and pastors whom I knew at that time. I know that he was Spirit-led as he spoke to me and if not I would have died a spiritual death and most likely would have continued to be a nominal church member. I once heard or read a testimony of one who had gone through a spiritual struggle. He said, "My heart was near to bursting," but there was none who knew this.

As a special message to pastors, I would like to refer to Jesus' special call to his disciples in Matthew 10. Jesus gave them instructions and power to preach that the kingdom of God was at hand. They were to provide neither gold, silver or a lot of clothes. When the doors are open, then proclaim God's Word, but when the doors close and they will not hear, then leave.

When a few storm clouds appear in the congregation, I am not saying that the pastor is always to blame, though pastors are also human and have made mistakes. Many years ago I had a pastor who had been here only five years. He was well accepted by a large majority and I felt he still had work to do in our congregation. He felt that he should accept another call and made this statement: "There is none of us pastors who are big enough to stay more than five years, as the congregation will be in his pattern or rut." I am not saying that every pastor should move every five years, but will add that I do not think it is good for the congregation that it be as long as 20 years. God's will is the most

"As a pastor is called to the congregation, the question is asked: Is the pastor called as the lord or the servant of the congregation?"

CHRISTIAN, WORK FOR JESUS

*Christian, work for Jesus,
Who on earth for thee
Laboured, wearied, suffered,
Died upon the Tree.*

*Work, with lips so fervid
That thy words may prove
Thou hast brought a message
From the God of love.*

*Work with heart that burneth
Humbly at His feet
Priceless gems to offer,
For His crown made meet.*

*Work, with prayer unceasing,
Borne on faith's strong wing,
Earnestly beseeching
Trophies for the King.*

*Work, while strength endureth,
Until death draws near;
Then thy Lord's sweet welcome
Thou in heaven shalt hear.*

*Mary Hasloch
(from The Church Hymnary)*

important and may that be the prayer of both the congregation and the pastor.

I like to mention one more thing with love and concern. I fear that pastors can get involved in owning property and becoming financially involved, so it becomes difficult and practically impossible to accept another call. A situation may have developed, the pastor is dissatisfied with the response to his work and the message from God's Word. He gets a call to another congregation and is in a position where it is hard for him to accept it or family ties may make it difficult to accept another call. I recall a

pastor's son who told his father who was going to a place for a trial sermon, "Preach so hard that they will not want you".

May I say to seminarians, and wives, these are just a few things that you will face in the ministry, but God will open and shut doors. The Holy Spirit will give guidance and wisdom and fill your hearts with love to the people whom you will be serving and many will respond with love to you and your family.

May the Lord's blessing rest upon every servant of God.

THE LAYMAN AS A SPEAKER

*by Harold O. Kilness
Plainview, S. Dak.*

"How about taking the sermon next week?" These are words that might stop some layman in his tracks and cause him to break out in a cold sweat. To someone else it can be a golden opportunity to serve the Lord that most parishioners never get to experience.

I remember the first time I was called upon to take my place in the pulpit. My pastor, Jay Erickson, asked me to take the service the following Sunday so he could go to the Annual Conference. I think my "cold sweat" lasted all week and I'm sure my sermon would have rated -1 to 0 in a scale of 0 to 10. But, thankfully, God can take the porridge from the weakest vessel and use it to his glory.

Today, although the vessel is the same, thanks be to God, the porridge, I hope, is a little tastier. I know that I get much more out of preparing my sermons than those poor people who have to listen to me. I'm sure this is true in the case of anyone who prepares a sermon, that he is blessed much more than those who hear the message.

No doubt the reason many laymen hesitate to accept the challenge presented them, when asked to give a sermon on a particular date, is that they simply feel inadequate. This is true of our own effort and understanding, but God has promised to be with us (Hebrews 13:5) and to direct us (Proverbs 3:5,6) and he has not given us a spirit of fear but of power, (II Timothy 1:7).

It is an old trick of the devil that he frequently uses today, that he tries to make people excuse themselves when it comes to doing the Lord's work. They're just too busy or "Let someone else do it; they've had more training in that field."

Moses used the excuse that he couldn't speak eloquently and therefore he couldn't speak before Pharaoh on behalf of the Israelites.

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THE WOMEN'S PAGE

A tribute to Judith

"Not sitting around waiting for something to happen . . . but being busy making things happen" are phrases that describe Judith Wold's life.

The AFLC's second Parish Education Executive Secretary has retired after 12 years of service. I would like to join others in paying tribute to this faithful servant of the Lord.

Recall with me the many happy times that you have seen Judith's little green-blue Cutlass Olds drive up to Bible Camp. Out she came, energetic and eager, unpacked her supplies, set up posters and lesson displays and set to work! It was at Family Camp at Alexandria Minn., 13 years ago that I first asked Judith if I might observe her teaching the large group of children. My husband was preparing for the ministry and I was an eager teacher looking for ideas. Judith's stories, songs, posters, visual aids and lessons all emphasized the main theme of the week. I was so impressed! She warmly welcomed the "newcomers," found ways to use the "old faithfuls" and enriched many young lives.

Can you imagine writing lessons, typing hundreds of pages, editing and mimeographing Sunday School booklets and materials year after year? After all the pages were ready, Judith arranged them on long tables and began the long tedious walk "round and round" the tables, gathering pages and stapling them into books. The next step was wrapping the books into neat packages and carrying them to the post office to be mailed to churches and mission fields. Judith loves to walk! It was a familiar sight at Thief River Falls to see her walking daily to the post office with her packages. The Lord even provided a sled for winter deliveries!

I came to know Judith in a closer way when I, too, joined the staff of teachers at Bible Camp and later was elected to the national Women's Missionary Federation Board. It was very special to travel together to meetings and to share the good things that our dear Lord was

teaching us. So often Judith shared the depth of experiences regarding dying to self. "It hurts enough to kill me! And that's exactly what it is supposed to do!" she cheerfully exclaimed.

The Lord arranged it that my husband came to be Judith's pastor and in those lovely years she called me her "First Lady." At every special holiday a gift appeared at our home from her and our children were always remembered. We could always count on Judith for hospital visitation. Fresh flowers or pretty centerpieces for the tables at Bible Camp were one of her many "inspirations." Often a beautiful new wall hanging would appear on the wall of the church sanctuary, a product of her creativity. Did someone need a ride to church or a special meeting? Call on Judith. Was a teacher urgently needed for Release Time or Wednesday night children's class? Judith was willing to serve. When my husband was away for special meetings or conferences the phone would surely ring with Judith offering an invitation to dinner. On the December night when our Couples Club had its annual supper and celebration, Judith enjoyed inviting our children to her home for a formal dinner and evening of games. Many a college girl has made her way to Judith's for warm hospitality. I even recall times when she visited AFLBS with little packages of home-baked cookies for Bible School students who had been some of her "special" children.

A whirlwind of efficiency, an earnest Christian, a faithful prayer partner, a keen Bible student, and ever ready to talk about our "earthwalk with Jesus" . . . that is Judith Wold!

There are many dear friends whom I would gladly honor with a tribute, but at this time of Judith's retirement from an AFLC ministry, it is a delight to say "Thank You" to her. Oh no, she isn't retiring from active Christian service! She is enjoying having her days available to God's use. God bless this dear Christian lady!

Mrs. Eugene (Beverly) Enderlein
Minneapolis, Minn.

SPEAKER . . .

Jonah used his own personal feelings and refused to accept God's command to go and preach to the Ninevites. It took a great fish, prepared by God, to change his way of thinking.

God used a blinding light that caused temporary blindness to change the hardened heart of Saul of Tarsus into the loving heart of the Apostle Paul.

The Lord doesn't need skilled workers but willing workers to accomplish what He has in mind for them to do.

It is awesome when you think how God used plain ordinary men, sheepkeepers, farmers, fishermen and tentmakers, who were simply willing to follow Him and do His will. This leaves us without excuse when we are called upon to serve Him in any way.

Now that we see we are without any excuse, we had better get on with preparing the sermon!

Preparation is the key to readiness in any venture. A farmer won't harvest much of a crop unless he goes out and carefully tills and prepares the soil. A skilled surgeon does not go to his patient on the morning of the operation and make his incision any old place that is convenient. No, he has carefully studied the x-rays, checked the latest procedure in his medical papers and consulted with fellow doctors before the operation begins. Even the patient has been prepared. The doctor has probably discussed the operation with the patient, explaining what to expect and what the possible outcome might be. And, finally, the area of the incision has been shaved, scrubbed and disinfected before the surgeon's knife is inserted.

"A layman or pastor who prepares a sermon without time in prayer is like a batter who steps up to the batter's box without his bat."

Just as a step by step procedure was taken in preparing for the hypothetical operation, it is just as important to lay out certain guidelines in the preparation of the sermon. Preparation may be the key to readiness, but preparation coupled with prayer is the key to success.

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THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Of whom shall we ask forgiveness?

by Martin Hegland

A senior in a North Dakota high school asks this question: "If we sin against our fellowmen, must we go to our fellowmen to ask forgiveness of them, before we are forgiven in the sight of God, or is it necessary only to ask and receive forgiveness of God?"

This question, in the eyes of some people, may not seem large or important, but it touches so vitally the very heart and essence of the Christian spirit that it is altogether worthy of thoughtful and prayerful attention.

Let us notice some things that Jesus says about forgiveness. In the perfect prayer that He taught His disciples and us, He embodied this petition: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." And He emphasizes the importance of the forgiving spirit by adding these weighty words at the close of His prayer: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

On another occasion the same question of forgiveness came up, and Jesus set forth a parable that in an unforgettable way impressed the duty of forgiveness upon His followers.

Here is the record: "Then came Peter and said to Him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would make a reckoning with his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, that owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant

therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred shillings: and he laid hold on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest. So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. And he would not; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldst not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant? even as I had mercy on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he

"But often there is fault on both sides. Who then is to make the first start?"

should pay all that was due. So shall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts" (Matt. 18:21-35).

These are clear words. No one can mistake their meaning.

"Yes," perhaps someone says, "we know that we are bound by Christian principles to forgive those who have wronged us and who ask for forgiveness, but what about those whom we have wronged; is it necessary to go to them and ask them to forgive us?"

There really ought not to be any question about this. It should be perfectly plain that if we have hurt or wronged anyone, we as Christians should be more than ready to go to them and ask to be forgiven and try to make amends for

what has been wrongly done. That would seem to be clearly implied in Jesus' whole teaching about forgiveness. If we are enjoined to forgive those who have wronged us, it should be even more evident that we should ask forgiveness of those whom we have wronged.

But we are not limited to mere inferences on this point. Jesus spoke words bearing directly on this matter. He said: "If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5:23-24).

5:23-24). But often there is fault on both sides. Who then is to make the start? Who is to take the first step in an effort to get together and make up after an injury, a quarrel, or a misunderstanding? The strictly logical answer would perhaps be: He who has the greatest blame should take the first step. But why be so particular about establishing the proportion of blame? If the impulse is in your heart to get right with a friend or foe, why not swallow a little of your pride, go to your fellowman, talk things over, and show your willingness to ask forgiveness for the smallest wrong that you have done him? You will be surprised, many a time, to discover how such an attitude on your part will break down his hostility and pave the way for a genuine reconciliation. It is not uncommon for each one in such a situation to say: "It was all my fault."

Oh, the heartaches that would be avoided if people at outs with one another would just simply get together and talk things over in a forgiving spirit! Yes, many instances of life-long hatred, desire for revenge, even the committal of murder would have been avoided if this had been done.

Certainly the most important thing, when we have sinned, is to ask forgiveness of God. But we may well ask if it is even possible for God to forgive us

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WHAT A PASTOR EXPECTS OF

by Rev. Donald Greven
Radcliffe, Iowa

After giving some thought to the writing of this article, I think that perhaps a better title would be "What God expects (or desires to see) in His people." I am only an under-shepherd. My desire and concern is not that people in my congregation meet *my* expecta-

tions, but that, above all, those in my care may be what *God* wants them to be. Our great desire is to point our people to Jesus, who is our Savior and Lord. It would, I am sure, fill every pastor's heart with joy unspeakable if the following four characteristics would be true of each member of his congregation.

First and foremost, a pastor wants

each of the people in his care to be saved and have the assurance of their salvation. The Scriptures plainly tell us that God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4). The Apostle John expresses the desire of every pastor when he writes, "I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth" (III John 4). The days of greatest joy for a pastor are when someone comes to him and expresses his need and desire to be saved and sure of it! I would urge anyone who is unsure of his eternal destiny to go to his pastor and share his spiritual need, that that need might be met through the Word of God.

The second characteristic that brings joy to God's heart, and to your pastor's is faithfulness. Faithfulness to Christ is expressed in many different ways. In our personal lives, we are to be faithful to Christ in our conversation, in our attitudes, in our business dealings, and in our homes. Parents are to be faithful and diligent in setting priorities for their children. If Christ really has first place in the parents' lives, surely they will guide their children in the way that will bring honor to Christ. Faithfulness should also be reflected in our prayer life. How sad it is to see professing Christians staying away from prayer meetings, and if there, to remain silent, leaving the impression that there is nothing to pray about. Finally, for the child of God, faithfulness should characterize our attendance at the assembling of the congregation,

SPEAKER...

A layman or pastor who prepares a sermon without time in prayer is like a batter who steps up to the batter's box without his bat. The most important item was left behind.

It is important for the layman to start early in his preparation of the sermon, seeking God's guidance in choosing the text. I like to read the text through several times early in the week. This enables one to think about the text while working during the week. You can make mental notes of thoughts that come to you as you meditate on what you have read or, better yet, jot them down on some scratch paper if you can. As a farmer I have a lot of time to think about the text as I drive the tractor. This is valuable time that can be put to good use and saves a lot of "stewing and sweating" the day before the sermon is due! Many a sermon has been thought

through by "yours truly" while sitting on the tractor. This is a big help when the time comes for pen and paper time. After all, you can have close communion with God, whether you are in an automobile, in your office or sitting on the tractor in the middle of your field.

Now when it comes down to the time when you need to actually write or prepare your sermon, you need to find a room or a corner where you can have quiet communion with God, an office or a bedroom where you can shut out the other noises of a busy household and you can talk to God and listen as He talks to you.

At this time I like to read the text several times and then consult a commentary or two and read the thoughts expressed by the writers, then prayerfully seek God's guidance, asking Him to give me the words of the message. Now you are able to recall the thoughts that God has laid upon your heart throughout the week, using them to bring out a particular point in the message. I have to write or type my message out so that I can have the entire message in front of me. Speaking was one of the talents that I evidently missed the day that they were handed out. I guess you'd have to call me a crutch speaker, because I need my entire notes before me.

When you have finished your sermon, again thank God for His gracious goodness and guidance, and pray for His blessing and support as you deliver your message. Then relax and enjoy the rest of the day that the Lord has given you. On Sunday you and the Lord have an important day.

LIFE...

if we give place in our hearts to an unforgiving spirit or to an attitude that is unwilling to go to a wronged person and ask forgiveness of him. The central message of Christ's teachings about forgiveness should prompt us most earnestly to seek reconciliation with our fellowmen.

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

Next time: What is the Unpardonable Sin?

*"When God's house is open
God's people should be
there because . . . it is a
testimony to the unsaved as
to what is truly important
to us."*

HIS PEOPLE

whether it be Sunday morning, evening, mid-week service or special meetings. When God's house is open, God's people should be there because it is necessary for the nourishment of our own souls, it encourages fellow believers, and it is a testimony to the unsaved as to what is truly important to us. The risen Christ says to His church, "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

Next, a spirit of co-operation and fellowship should characterize every child of God. God intends for Christians to work in harmony with one another in the congregation, displaying a unity and oneness in Christ. This means, among other things, that when we are being led by the Spirit of God, and not by the old nature, we will be anxious to do our part in the building up of the body of Christ. We will want to build up, rather than tear down, one another. We will recognize that different Christians have different spiritual gifts and that each one is necessary to our growth in Christ. And we will care for each other, help each other, be concerned for each other and forgive each other when we are wronged.

Finally, we must be vision-minded. "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18). Oh, how the Christians in every congregation need a vision of what God wants to accomplish in their personal lives, in their congregation and through the missions of our fellowship. When we have caught the vision of what God wants to accomplish through us, then we will use all the resources that God has given us (our bodies, our time, the privilege and responsibility of prayer, our talents, our finances) to see that vision become a reality to the glory of God.

Let us remember that Christ "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds" (Titus 2:14). May God grant that we be among those people.

Personalities

New address for *Pastor and Mrs. John Strand*, formerly of Fargo, N. Dak., is Star Route 3, Box 140, Remer, Minn. 56672. Telephone: (218) 566-2933. Pastor Strand continues to preach at the Sunday services of St. Paul's Lutheran in Fargo until a new pastor is secured for the congregation.

Borup church hosts laymen

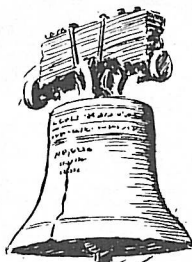
Jevnaker Lutheran Church, four miles east and two miles south of Borup, Minn., will host the June meeting of the Northern Minnesota Lutheran Laymen's Society. The text for discussion will be Romans 6. All are welcome.

Art Joppru, Chm.
Joe Jacobson, Sec.

Psalm 61:2: "From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

Many Christians would give you the impression that once you are saved that you'll live on a perpetual "high." A thorough study of Scripture shows us that this is not so. The psalmist sank to the very depths, as did the apostle Paul. But God gives peace in the midst of the "pieces." In the most difficult circumstances God's all-sufficient grace is there to grant us strength, peace, and joy. For every Christian, the tears still come; there is still pressure, temptation, etc. But there is an inner power to face life's circumstances with confidence. The psalmist tells us, "Call on Me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify Me." "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of all of them."

*Pastor Richard Bartholomew
(In Voice of the Valley,
Kalispell, Mont.)*



BOOK REVIEW

The Depressed Christian

This is the second book by Pastor Mundfrom dealing with mental depression. He has served as pastor in Minnesota, North and South Dakota and is at present a member of the Association of Lutheran Free Congregations.

In a day when so many Christians experience depression there is need of help and enlightenment. The first part of the book deals with facts about depression. These are helpful in pin-pointing the source of trouble and can lead to relief.

The second part of the book shows how to deal with depression. This, to me, is the most valuable part of the book. The book should be very helpful to pastors in dealing with members of the flock who suffer from depression. Our rest homes are full of people suffering from spiritual darkness who need help. If these had met understanding and wise counselling earlier in life their evening of life might have been more pleasant.

The book can be ordered from the author at the address below, price \$2.25. Add .75 cents for postage cost.

Pastor Gerald F. Mundfrom
R. 1, Box 503
Osceola, Wis. 54020

Reviewed by A. E. Windahl,
editor of *Morning Glory*

This review appeared first in the May 20, 1982, issue of *Morning Glory*.

I exhort therefore, that, . . . supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made . . . for kings, and for all that are in authority; I Tim. 2:1-2

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

112-mass, mssy, signed at "Nashville, 20th Nov. 1846."
 It, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, assembled, appearing to the Supreme Judge of the said for the redress of our in
 justice, do, in the Name and by Authority of the great Ruler of the universe solemnly protest and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent
 States; That they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and
 that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent
 States may of right do. And for the Support of the Declaration, with solemn solemnity and in the presence of the Supreme Judge of the said, we do hereby pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes
 and our sacred Honor.

Charles T. Brooks
 John Hancock
 John Barstow

Clear Water
Halden, Vermont