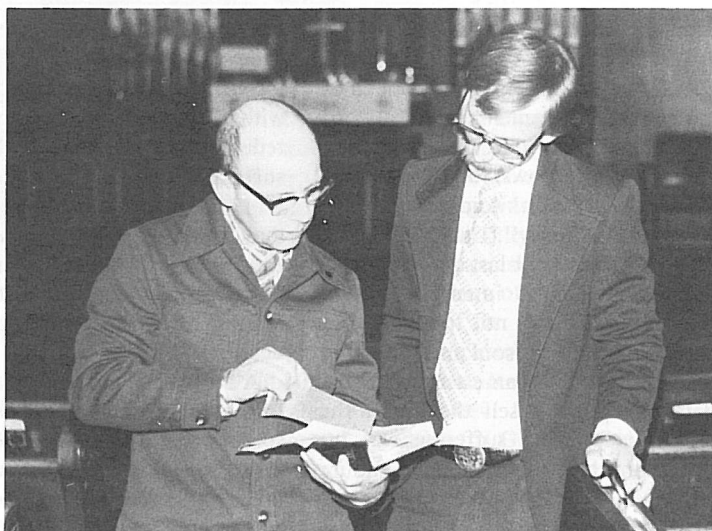


THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

March 16, 1982



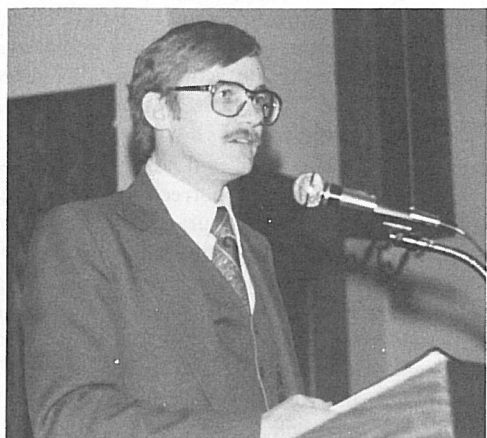
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"God's Rest in Times of Trouble"



Members of Amery WMF

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AT THE MASTER'S FEET

Rev. Bruce Dalager



BLESSED CONTRITION

"And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, 'Before a cock crows today, you will deny Me three times.' And he went outside and wept bitterly" (Luke 22:61, 62).

We observed in our last devotional article that the most intense suffering Jesus endured was not physical but rather the anguish of soul and spirit that was His when He became accursed, having taken upon himself the sin of the world. His physical suffering was intense, more than any man could endure for long. But His Passion included more than that. He was truly a man of sorrow, acquainted with grief.

Believers in Christ, like their Lord, experience suffering. Because they live in a

sin-cursed world in bodies that have been affected by sin, they suffer physically, groaning and suffering along with all creation waiting for the day of redemption (Romans 8:22, 23). Physical suffering, like death, is a result of sin that all people experience. Though it may for many people be an excruciating experience, the believer clings to a hope based on God's Word that one day all tears shall be wiped away and pain and death shall be no more.

A suffering that is more intense than that produced by physical pain is the sorrow that is produced by the Holy Spirit in the heart of the sinner who is made to see his sin. Such soul-sickness is capable of producing physical side-effects. The sinner under conviction may not be able to sleep or eat. He may become restless and ornery, taking out his frustrations on those around him. His heart, respiration and nervous system are affected as he wrestles with God. To see one's self as God does is a painful experience.

Blessed is the person who has felt the painful pangs of conscience and has been moved to repentance. Too seldom do we see sinners, ourselves included, moved to the degree of brokenness and sorrow for sin that David manifested in Psalm 51: "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in Thy sight" (vs. 2-4). Sverdrup's explanation of Luther's Small

Catechism says regarding repentance, "He who truly repents feels his sin with shame and sorrow . . ." Certainly the child of God cannot look upon his sin recklessly or confess with glibness, "Oops, I goofed." When he recalls the great suffering his sin caused the Son of God he will feel more than a casual concern about his sinfulness.

There is not any certain degree of contrition which we must reach and present to God before we can be forgiven. The moment God sees the slightest repentance, He moves to forgive. But we should not by this fact stop short of the brokenness and contrition of heart to which God would lead us. Many times people lack assurance of salvation because they have not dealt with their sin and open rebellion against God honestly or completely.

The only conception some people have of their sin is what they think of when they politely confess on Sunday morning, "We are by nature sinful and unclean . . ." Sit down sometime and read the confession using "I" instead of "we." I must see that *my* sin sent Jesus to the cross.

The believer does not base his salvation on the correctness of his repentance. His assurance comes from the Word which shows him his Savior. But neither is he so presumptuous as to assume that he can have assurance of forgiveness if he would willfully refuse to repent. He knows that the promise of forgiveness and cleansing is for those who will repent.

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7 times He spoke

For at least six hours Jesus hung on Golgotha's wretched cross. From the sixth hour (noon) until the ninth an eerie darkness covered the land as the sun's light failed. Thus was nature itself affected by the terrible spectacle just outside Jerusalem. And during the whole ordeal Jesus spoke seven times from the cross. Those utterances have come down to us as the Seven Last Words of Christ. They are treasured words from the lips and heart of our beloved Savior. Thousands of sermons are being preached on them in this Lenten season. Two of our pastors write, each on one, in this issue.

by Pastor Mauritz Lundeen,
Bagley, Minn.

"Today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43b).

When one initially attempts to interpret this Scripture passage in its entirety, the mind is bogged. Viewed as a whole, this passage concerning the incident of our Lord's approaching death may leave one numb. Yet, as we view the scene, the crowd and the three crosses, and as we listen attentively, we will find there are meaningful words spoken. Words are the expression of the mind that utters them. The ridicule of the crowd, the words spoken by the criminals, the words of love spoken by our Lord, reveal to us this truth.

We have entitled this article "Dialogue from the Cross" because of the prominent change in the attitude of the malefactor who believed. Life gives us many illustrations of the way love, by its warmth, can change completely the character of another. Love is a hidden force just waiting to be released by a word or example. It was so with the criminal who came to experience this hidden force from the words of love which Christ spoke to him, "Today you will be with me in Paradise."

Let us now survey the three crosses. There has never been such a tragic sight in the history of the world as was seen the day that Jesus died between two criminals. Inspired artists still paint this scene with much emotion and sensitivity. Poets write lines with moving clarity to depict the meaning of the scene. We wear the cross on our lapels and dangle it from delicate chains around our necks. We top our steeples with the cross and decorate our pews with it. Far too often we view this as a pastoral scene and wear the cross without grasping its real message.

DIALOGUE FROM THE CROSS

This scene at the place called the Skull was far from pastoral. Vicious Roman soldiers roughly threw the bloodstained Man to the ground and pinned His arms against the wooden beam. The executioner placed a large spike into position and with a solid blow drove it through the Victim's hand and into the crossbar behind. He then leaped across the agonizing form of Jesus, knelt over the other arm, and pounded another large spike through Christ's hand into the beam. The soldiers then lifted the cross into position and dropped it into place. Then the executioner nailed Jesus' feet to the cross. This procedure is repeated in the same manner with the two criminals.

Now the torture begins. Raising up on nailed feet, they breathe more easily until the leg muscles knot into hard, round balls which cause them to slump on the cross until they can no longer inhale and lungs are crying for air. They push up to breathe a little. Up and down, up and down. With every movement the cramping in the legs and the difficulty in breathing is multiplied. For six long hours Jesus suffered on that cross, while His mind was in agony.

"Inspired artists still paint this scene (of crucifixion) with much emotion and sensitivity."

Next, may we recognize that the placement of the three crosses was not accidental. "There they crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them" (John 19:18). On that hillside, outside the city wall, God's arranging hand can be seen in the way the three sufferers had been placed. When Pilate gave the orders of placement, he did not know it but he was putting God's plan into action. Man meant to increase the shame of the sinless Christ by putting Him between these criminals as though He were the worst of the three.

God ruled in the placing of the two criminals in order to represent the two distinct classes of people—the *saved*, receiving forgiveness, love, life and fulfillment, and the *lost*, cast out into darkness where men will weep and gnash their teeth.

Three crosses on a lonely hill,
A thief on either side;
And, in between, the Son of God . . .
How wide the gulf—how wide.¹

As the fevered eyes of our Lord survey the scene before Him, the dialogue of the crowd begins. "He saved others; let Him save Himself, if He is the Christ of God . . . If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself" (Luke 23:35b, 37).

Notice how wide the gulf is between Jesus and one of the other men on the cross. A loud, savage voice cries out. It comes from one of the two condemned criminals, furious and rebellious to the end. This man has to attack somebody, so why not the Man next to him, who he had heard was supposed to work miracles? What is He waiting for? "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" (Luke 23:39). There is an irrevocable gulf that cannot be breached because the words were full of bitterness and there was no repentance in the heart of this man.

DIALOGUE . . .

There is a moment of silence. Then the silence is broken by the man on the farther side: "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong" (Luke 23:40, 41). In this sinful soul the Holy Spirit was moving. He recognized his lost state and said, "Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingly power" (Luke 23:42). Did he know the full meaning of his words, or realize what Kingdom it was to which he was seeking admission?

Probably not. According to the story in the other two Gospels (Matthew and Mark), the criminal blasphemed with his profane companion one moment and bowed in penitent prayer the next. To be sure, the man had heard Jesus pray the prayer of forgiveness of His enemies in His first sentence from the cross. The jeers of Jesus' enemies making fun of Him enlightened the criminal of the fact that Jesus claimed to be Divine. We may try to go back into the past life of this criminal, which, of course, would be pure supposition. Had he ever heard Jesus preach? Had he witnessed any of His miracles? And then the question, how much did the criminal really know of the Kingdom when he cried out his petition? We may guess at the answers, but Scripture does not give us the answers. In his past life the criminal may have heard but had not received grace.

Whatever the answer, the man is in a position to be saved. All the dying criminal could do was believe. And naked faith in Christ saved him. The man was not good; he did not deserve salvation. It came because of the grace of God. "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of your own doing, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). He cried his prayer of faith and crossed over the great gulf between man and Jesus, for:

"All the dying criminal could do was believe, and naked faith in Christ saved him."

One thief spanned in with the words,
 "Oh, Lord, remember me,"
 The other scoffed and turned aside
 to lost eternity.¹

Jesus was dying upon the cross. By all outward appearances, He had lost His power to save. No! The cry of faith fell upon his ears, and he spoke these words of assurance to the dying criminal, "... Today you will be with Me in Paradise."

What comfort these words are to the dying saint who has lived his life faithfully each moment, and also to a repentant soul at the last breath of his life. Jesus said "*Today*," not after a time—there is no halfway place. The word *Today* denies purgatory, a place where sinful souls are supposed to work out their salvation in fear and cleansing. *Today* denies the doctrine of "soul sleep," the teaching that the departed spirit sleeps until the last judgment. *Today, immediately*, says Jesus—*Today*. Our text insists upon a conscious, intermediate state where Christ is and where we know each other while waiting for our new resurrected body, in which we will finally be judged. Again, note the time—"today." Jesus is saying, "You have taken Me as your Savior. You and I will go immediately to Heaven and be together throughout all eternity." What reassuring words!

Soon after speaking these words, "Today you will be with Me in Paradise," He gives His spirit to His Father and dies. The earth darkens. The crowd departs. The cruel deed is done. The bodies are taken down.

Forsaken is the hilltop now,
 And all the crosses gone,
 But in believing hearts of men
 the center cross lives on.

And still, as when there sentinels
 First met earth's wondering view,
 The presence of the Lord divides—
 Upon which side are you?¹

On that lone hill of Calvary we still have the picture of the center cross, which is Christ's, representing a dying Savior. The other two crosses represent a dying saint and a dying sinner. Viewing these crosses, we are found hanging on one. This scene presents the separation Christ brings out. Upon which side are you?

1. "Three Crosses", Helen Franzee Bower

IT IS FINISHED

by Rev. Frank Miller
 Homosassa, Fla.

"It is finished!" (John 19:30).

"It is finished" says Jesus in those last agonizing moments as He hung upon the cruel cross of Calvary. The work "which the Father hath given Me to finish, the work of him that sent Me, the work which the Father hath given Him to do," was now completed. At least five times does John in his Gospel account remind us of Jesus' obedient desire to complete that work. And now in this 30th verse of the 19th chapter, John tells us that Jesus said, "It is finished!" and then "Bowed His head, and gave up the ghost."

"It is finished," testifies the writer, John, of this Gospel account, for "I was there and I saw Him die upon that cross." And so can His mother, Mary, and the other women present around the cross testify.

"It is finished," say the leaders of the Jews. "This troublesome Nazarene has now died and will bother us no more with His strange sayings and the many acts which people testify that He accomplished. He has died upon that cross; get Him down ere the Sabbath begins and get rid of Him. Guard well His burial place to be sure none of the things which are said He would do after His death or that His followers would try to do might be done."

"It is finished," the cry comes from deep within the hearts of the disciples who had followed Him for so many days, who were present with Him and who witnessed His mighty works and heard His wonderful words. "Yet now He has died; the work is finished, all is gone; let's get back to where we were and what we formerly were doing."

"It is finished," say many of that time, of our age and time, and of time yet to come. They turn away from Him who died upon that cross and live their lives without any understanding of what happened nor why it happened. "How could One who died upon a cross effect any kind of salvation for me? He's dead and gone, isn't He? He died on that cross!" Oh, some might admit that a number of the things He did while He was alive were of a kind to be duplicated by others, and some of His sayings truly important and worthy of being remembered, repeated and followed, but most would and will dismiss Him and look for other "leaders" and "things" to follow after, emulate and adore.

"It is finished!" jubilantly cries the true believer, one who has given his life and all things over to this Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. He recognizes that "It is finished!" was

"How could One who died upon a cross effect any kind of salvation for me? He's dead and gone, isn't He?"

no idle cry of Jesus. it was a triumphal cry which was to echo down the ages and forever. The work which the Father had given Him to do was now fully accomplished. Jesus, the Son, Himself had born upon that very cross the sins of all people, past, present and future. He became Sin so that He could rescue Man from Sin. What a burden He shouldered! A burden that could not be put off nor removed until He had satisfied every condition of God's perfect plan of restitution and redemption! Alienated, sinful Man now was and would be brought back unto the Father; Man was reconciled to God.

Because Jesus could cry out, "It is finished!" the true believer in Him could say, "Because Jesus took my

sin upon that cross, my burden of sin, shame and guilt is removed and I am free in Him. He has restored me in wholeness, righteousness and joyousness to fellowship with God. With His blood shed upon that Cross He has washed me and made me whiter than snow, purer than pure in Him. With His subsequent resurrection, and with His 'Follow Me,' I am assured of His promises that like Him I, too, will inherit eternal life. Thank You, Jesus, for finishing the work which God the Father gave You to do, for making eternal salvation not only possible but secure for me and for all who would accept You and follow You! No longer do I or anyone else need to struggle and try to earn that salvation for ourselves; You, and only You, earned it for us!" That work, that redemption, that assurance is made complete—"It is finished!"

***"Thank You,
Jesus,
for finishing
the work
which God the
Father gave You
to do"***

Thou who didst on Calvary bleed

*Thou who didst on Calvary
bleed,
Thou who dost for sinners
plead,
Help me in my time of need;
Jesus, hear my cry.*

*In my darkness and my
grief,
With my heart of unbelief,
I, who am of sinners chief,
Lift to Thee mine eye.*

*Foes without and fears
within,
With no plea Thy grace to
win
But that Thou canst save
from sin,
To Thy Cross I fly.*

*Others, long in fetters
bound,
There deliverances sought
and found,
Heard the voice of mercy
sound;
Surely so may I.*

*There on Thee I cast my
care;
There to Thee I raise my
prayer;
Jesus, save me from
despair,—
Save me, or I die.*

*When the storms of trial
lower,
When I feel temptation's
power,
In the last and darkest hour,
Jesus, be Thou nigh.*

James Drummond Burns
(from *The Church Hymnary*)

LET OUR CHURCH MUSIC HONOR GOD

by Mr. Donald Rodvold,
Director of Music, AFLBS

Part One

Do you remember that time in your life when you suddenly became impressed by the awareness that all Japanese children speak Japanese? Or Greek children can speak Greek, a very difficult language, and Norwegian children can speak perfect Norse. Actually there's no good reason to be impressed; they're merely exercising what our children do, the mother tongue, the language in common use. Nevertheless, I'm still impressed and enjoy hearing the children chatter.

This mother tongue principle has been ingeniously applied to music by Shinitsu Suzuki in the teaching of violin (and other strings) and piano. His method has amazed the world. Three and four year olds playing Baroque masterpieces is astonishing, and the more I observe, the more it becomes evident that learning the music (which will forever enrich their lives) is not the only benefit of the method. They learn patience, stick-to-it-iveness, insight and sensitivity, and these attitudes, learned in youth, will also stay with them and serve them a lifetime.

Simply put, children can learn to play the violin or piano as early and as easily as they learn to talk, and what one is exposed to, particularly in these formative years, be it language or music, becomes his own.

This is not an advocacy of a method; it's an advocacy to shun childish preoccupations in music, before they become set, just as we do in speech. Shun baby talk and shun weak musical associations with Christ. Point the children, musically, to the real image of God's Incarnate Son Jesus Christ before He becomes little more than a "fun uncle."

Why do Japanese children speak Japanese? Why do PKs (preachers' kids) so often become pastors? Why are some of the most devout worshipers in our parishes pastors' kids? They grew up in the environment and cherish it. Teach

your children now what you would have them be in all manner of things, including music, and you'll have real worshipers in the next generation. Conversely, let them sing jingles now and they'll sing jingles all their lives.

Wean your children from milk to solids as soon as is practicable lest they become undernourished. Watch the candy now, and they won't need musical narcotics as teens.

"... what one is exposed to, particularly in these formative years, be it language or music, becomes his own."

Put something of substance on their lips and before long it's in their hearts. We must all sing with the spirit and with the mind also (I Cor. 14:15).

Today's children face a heavy barrage of jingle-ism and novelty-ism and gimmickry and slick-sell. We must lean hard to overcome the paralleling tendencies that are becoming trendy among evangelicals. We live in the midst of an age of intense competition between religious corporations for money and people. But apparently there are plenty of fish in the sea; many people are looking for something more than Jesus Christ in their religious affiliation. "If I'm going to join a church," said a member of a popular TV congregation, "I want one that offers something extra." Consequently, the evangelists try to out-do each other with their premiums and implied promises. Indeed, the similarities between those who sell Christ and those who sell Chrysler are embarrassing to those who are trying to convince the world of the reality of the Incarnate Son of God revealed in the Bible.

The philosophy of merchandising

Christ, especially in music, is displacing theology, and we should disassociate ourselves from it. Besides, the decisive factor is not whether this or that particular hymn or song will be pleasing to and accepted by the *assembled body*; rather, is it worthy of being offered in corporate worship of *Almighty God*?

"New Congregations Presently Being Formed" might be a good slogan for Home Missions, but it's also a dramatic truth for every pastor in every activity of the parish, particularly Sunday School. New congregations are being formed by the music they sing. Put into our mouths and hearts the pure, strong and moving words of good hymns (and of our *Concordia* service), and we will be brought up in the pure teaching of the Church, and the AFLC of the future will be a genuine Lutheran church.

"The philosophy of merchandising Christ, especially in music, is displacing theology, and we should disassociate ourselves from it."

Part Two

For worshipping Lutherans, congregational singing is the heart of their response to God's outpouring of love as we sing our hymns of thanksgiving, adoration, praise, prayer and proclamation. Singing hymns is the greatest portion of what the congregation does; their selection should merit thoughtful consideration.

It's easy to err. Not all hymns are rich and strong and with power to nourish faith and life; not all are able to help Christians hear all they must, nor praise God as they want, nor lead them into the fulness of His peace and joy.

What the congregation really enjoys are the tunes and the rhythm, but if music is to be a worthy vessel of the

A PAGE FOR CHILDREN

Missionary Heroes

Thomas Mayhew

Who Began Missionary Work Among the Indians When He Was Seventy (1658-1680)

Such a valiant soul ought surely to be included in the list of Heroes. Some folk think their work is done at 70, but not so Mr. Thomas Mayhew, the New Englander, Governor of Martha's Vineyard and adjacent islands, in the far-back year of 1641. However, his missionary work did not begin that year, and it did begin first of all in the giving of his son to devote his life to the Indians. Rev. Thomas Mayhew, Jr., was first a minister to the settlers in his neighborhood but extended his services of love to the thousands of red men thereabouts.

His first accomplishment was the mastery of the native language. He was very successful in this, and soon had a flourishing mission. The first convert was named Hiacoomes. He put himself under Mr. Mayhew's instruction and became a teacher, and afterwards a preacher to his own people. The very first school in New England for the benefit of the Indians was established in 1651. In another year, a church was organized. There were 282 members. The "covenant," which all agreed to

accept as church members, was repared in the Indian tongue by Mr. Mayhew.

About five years after this, the earnest missionary set out for England, to get money for his mission. He was lost at sea.

Then it was that his father, the governor, at the age of 70, determined to take his son's place, and bravely began the study of the native language. Heroes are not all young men, you see, although many begin very early to be heroic.

This staunch missionary began preaching at the different plantations week by week in turn, sometimes walking 20 miles through the woods to meet his Indian congregations. In 1670 was organized the first Indian church with a native pastor. There were then about 3,000 native Christians upon the island.

The indefatigable Mr. Mayhew kept on with his missionary work until he died, in his 93rd year. Is not this a wonderful record?

His grandson, John, became associated with the work and was active in it until he died in 1688, when *his* son, Experience, took it up, and continued it for 32 years. In 1709 he translated the Psalms and John's Gospel.

Surely this is a family that should not be forgotten.

—Julia H. Johnson, *Fifty Missionary Heroes Every Boy and Girl Should Know*, Fleming H. Revell Company.

*"Keep silence
before Me,
O islands; and
let the people
renew their
strength:
let them come
near; then let
them speak: let
us come near
together to
judgment"*

(Isaiah 41:1)

sovereign Word of God, it must serve the words, and it must be easy to sing without being simplistic or childish. It must be artistically good in its own part, suited to the task, not unlike a minister. An unsuited man in the pulpit can bring disaster to a congregation; so can unsuited songs. They can also undo what a good sermon may have just accomplished. Artistically inferior music should have no association with the Word, no matter how well intended it may have been.

Both words and music should be subjected to every kind of critical examination—theological, psychological, meaning, propriety and usefulness for our congregations. Say a hymn and you'll recognize immediately the quality of the

poetry. Say the words aloud and hear them and think about them; understand them. What do they say? Are they a satisfactory representation of your own innermost feelings, or a recitation of clichés? Or, worse, banal repetition? Do they present a weak, watered down Son of God, or one who is historically and Scripturally accurate?

"Artistically inferior music should have no association with the Word, no matter how well intended it may have been."

In good hymns the texts will speak of sin and repentance, of death and salvation, of passion and resurrection; the thanksgiving will be profound, equal to our gratitude, and the joyfulness ample. The prayerfulness will be sincere, earnest, pious and humble without a hint of flippancy; the proclamation will be commensurate to His command to go and tell; the adoration will be adequate for the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

"No single influence in public worship can so surely condition a congregation to self-deception and religious perversity as thoughtlessly chosen hymns," Erik Routley, English theologian and musician.

[Continued on page 8]

MUSIC . . .

"Search Me, O God" was once number one on the hit parade (late Forties), then known as "Now Is the Hour" and sung by Gracie Fields. This Hawaiian love song is an embarrassment to many Christians who recall the ballad's original lyrics. But this waltz is not nearly as offensive as another favorite among many evangelicals: the Doxology sung to a tango called "Hernando's Hideaway," which was also a charts champion (early Fifties). With more Christian composers writing more good Christian music than ever, why do we revive and religiously ordain for a term these "golden oldies?" Because what we really enjoy are tunes, and good tunes give us pleasure, a good feeling. Some even make us happy. But they fall short as nurturers of spirituality; the "comfort" they give is a good feeling, perhaps a sense of well being, but short of the "comfort" of the Holy Spirit who inhabits our hearts and lets us draw near to God in full assurance of faith. The tunes may delight us with their charm; both the waltz with its gentle sway and the tango with its rhythmic pulse appeal to the pleasure instinct in us. But the spiritual instinct is deeper and more subtle and yearns for more than a mellow sensation. The spirit longs for God's peace, distinct from the intoxication offered by enchanting reverie. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (Jn. 14:27 KJV).

There's a strong implication in the preceding that seems to impugn the faith of those who enjoy pseudo-spiritual music. This impression must be tempered. Although much of what we do and say and sing is entirely inappropriate to our intent and desire in living and in worship, much of that is legal and even acceptable. But while these things may be lawful, not all are helpful, and the Word makes clear what God would have us do.

Paul prayed for the Church "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and

height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3:16-19).

Some hymns, more than others, are helpful; some, alone, can lead the singer into this tremendous knowledge, this fulness of God. Our people want and deserve every opportunity and advantage to have this comprehension. Therefore, we must be mindful in the selection and use of hymns that we do

not substitute the pleasurable for the spiritual and thus potentially deprive the singer the complete expansion of the dimensions and potency of Christ's love.

Finally, some general observations which can encourage and build the congregation in its ability to praise God with its singing.

Stand To Sing

An ancient adage professed that we "stand to sing, sit to learn and kneel to

[Continued on page 14]



UNDER THE CROSS

Under the Cross while my Savior is bleeding,
Bearing the guilt and the curse of my sin,
There I behold Him, my God-given ransom,
By whose redemption alone I can win.

Chorus:

Under Thy Cross, Savior divine,
Just as I am, receive me!

Under the Cross, Lord, make me all Thine!
All that I have, I give Thee.

Under the Cross, while my Savior is praying,
Tenderly pleading for friends and for foe;
Safe and secure I abide in His presence,
God will forgive me for His sake, I know.

Under the Cross, while my Savior is dying,
Shedding His heart-blood to ransom my soul,
There I will linger and pledge Him my service,
Yielding my all to His loving control.

Under the Cross I behold my Redeemer,
Purchasing pardon for sinners like me,
Paving the way that will lead me to Heaven;
Under the Cross my salvation I see.

C. K. Solberg
(from *In the Quiet Moments*)

(The above poem may be sung to the melody of "Under His Wings I Am Safely Abiding.")



editorials

GOD'S REST

Instead of trying to write a report on the content of the essays which were given, an almost impossible task, at the three Bible conferences last month, we shall comment briefly on the five sub-topics under the general theme, "God's Rest in Times of Trouble." Our report will be colored by the essays given at Valley City for those were the ones we heard, but surely there must have been similarity among them all.

Before getting to that, let us say that the fellowship at Valley City was very good. It was good to be there. We are sure those who attended one or more of the conferences can testify to that. It is too bad that not more people could have been present. We have had much better attended single conferences than those of Valley City and Osceola put together this year. We don't know the reason for the decline, but people attend as individuals and it is hard to say what factors worked against their coming this time. Certainly the weather wasn't a problem, for it was very good.

But the conference essays. First, "*Our Great Need for Rest.*" Our world is one of unrest. It is easy to see that. God rested on the seventh day and has built into life the need for rest. This rest isn't just the cessation from work, but it is trust in God, it is the sense of peace. People try to make themselves right with God through working, but they never know when they have done enough. We ought to rest in the finished work of Christ. The human soul is always restless until it rests in God.

Second, "*The Foundation for Rest.*" Anything that man builds can be destroyed and will decay. 1) Jesus Christ is the resting place for the sinner. When he comes in his sin to the Savior he finds peace with God. 2) Jesus Christ is the resting place of the saint. He needs to live in the divine presence. The Lord is a haven amid the trials of life. 3) Jesus Christ is the resting place for the backslider. The backslider is weak, fearful and anxious. In returning to Christ he can find assurance and trust.

Third, "*God's Rest in Trials and Afflictions.*" Why is suffering permitted? There are various reasons: discipline, correction, purification, purging, to get our attention. To put it simply, trials wake us up. But we are not to lose courage in suffering, but to endure it joyfully. Trials won't last forever and the Lord has promised that He will never forsake His own.

Fourth, "*God's Rest in Time of Affluence.*" This was the most intriguing of the topics. What problems can there be if one "has it made?" But wealth and riches do not provide all answers. In fact, they don't answer the deep questions of life. We can learn from Paul, who had learned to rest in the Lord whether he had much or little. God is in control; that gives the Christian peace.

Fifth, "*Rest Eternally in Christ.*" "In My Father's house are many mansions;" those words of Jesus have been a great

comfort to believers on the pilgrim journey. Jesus won't be content in His heaven without His people. The length of our lives is not important, but having Christ in our hearts. We should love the heavenly home, plan for it and pray about it. Death will bring us there unless we are here when the Lord returns. Heaven is a beautiful, wonderful place, the "eternal rest" of the people of God.

The studies in the Book of Galatians tied in well with the topic of "Rest." Paul wrote to the Galatians for that very purpose, to get them to rest in the work of Jesus for their salvation. Judaizers were trying to get the Christians to put their faith in Christ *and* works. Paul wrote that Jesus is all they and we need.

Once again, all who attended the conferences received such good hospitality, in meals served in the churches and the ARC, in being guests in the homes and just in general. Thank you, host congregations, the ARC, pastor's wives, all of you for blessed days of fellowship. We only hope that those of us who visited with you for a while left some blessing, some encouragement with you.

ISN'T THAT GOOD NEWS?

The Final Report of contributions toward the AFLC "budget" (we thought we were going to get away from that word) in 1981-82 (to be found elsewhere in this issue) is very good, isn't it?

While the total goal wasn't reached, the receipts were up over \$200,000 from last year. That's a real cause for rejoicing. And you people deserve a lot of thanks for the way you came through. Some of you are AFLC members and some of you are helping out because you believe in what we're trying to do.

Most of all, our thanks should go to the Lord, who made all this possible. The rain gives "seed to the sower and bread to the eater" (Is. 55:10). And back of the rain is the Creator God. All that we have is a stewardship from Him. It is good that this portion of our wealth, at least, has been dedicated to Christian work through our church.

It is interesting to note that two years from now, barring a national financial depression, we will be speaking of having achieved our first million dollar "budget." That will be quite a milestone, but it wouldn't have been possible without the good response to this one.

Two final thoughts. Association friends came through for World Missions again. It appeared that there might be a real shortfall in that area this year. The need became known and a flurry of support put World Missions over the top. The AFLC has a long history of interest in World Missions.

A sobering note was the failure over against our Schools. Perhaps this year we can strengthen our support there so that the deficit with which they finished the year can be made up.

Keep up the good work.

EDITORIALS . . .

A NEW PRINTER

After one has written an address over a thousand times, it can be a bit of an adjustment to transfer to another one. But that is what we are doing now as, with this issue, we are working with a new printer for *The Lutheran Ambassador*.

The new printer is Printing Arts, Inc., of Minneapolis, Minn. Now we are working with Ray Becker and his capable crew. They and we are attempting to make the transition as smooth as possible. What you see today, in this issue, is their first edition of our paper.

One real benefit of our change of printers is the hope of getting the *Ambassador* out to you, our readers, more promptly. Because of the schedules we are able to arrange with Printing Arts you should get your magazine by publication date and even before, if all goes well.

And we say a hearty thank-you to our former printer, Bethany Fellowship, Inc., of Minneapolis. We thank them for the 19 years of cooperation. We've always felt that they, too, gave us a quality publication as to technical production. With their help, we were able to "hit the ground running" when we

began in 1963. Bethany is out of the periodical publishing business now and we wish them God's best in their ever-expanding outreaches for Christ.

THE COMING CONFERENCE

If March is here, can June be far behind? And the way time goes, we have to say, "Not very far behind."

And that brings us to the point that we encourage advance information about business to come before the Annual conference. The *Ambassador* is a place for dissemination of information. Let's make use of it. The better informed people are before they come to conference, the better the conference will be.

Agencies, officers, committees are invited to submit any reports and information they have which will prepare our church for dealing in a better way, with discussion, thought and prayer beforehand, with the items of business to properly come before her in conference.

The Annual Conference of 1982 will be held at the State College in Dickinson, N. Dak., June 16-20.

FINAL REPORT

ASSOCIATION OF FREE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

BUDGET RECEIPTS (1981-82)

Fund	Total Budget	Congregational Receipts In January	Non- Congregational Receipts	Total Received To Date	% of Current	Over and (Under)
General Fund	\$135,980.00	\$14,280.23		\$138,285.87	102	\$ 2,305.87
Schools						
AFLTS	82,834.00	8,352.90	980.00	75,714.22	91	(7,119.78)
AFLBS	143,312.00	15,618.38	3,347.00	126,375.11	88	(16,936.89)
Home Missions	197,200.00	17,271.12	6,316.00	191,861.82	97	(5,338.18)
World Missions	218,880.00	41,824.44		218,941.01	100	61.01
Praise	31,000.00	3,705.70		29,113.22	94	(1,886.78)
TOTAL	\$809,206.00	\$101,052.77	\$10,643.00	\$780,291.25	96	(\$28,914.75)
1980-81	\$582,237.00	\$ 93,678.72		\$574,010.73	99	(\$ 8,226.27)

RESIST THE DEVIL

And finally, when we think earnestly of what the beloved Master would teach us here, we are led to be more watchful, more intensely on guard against this ever-present malignant influence, whose first effort it is to sow discord and death into the ranks and lives of Christians. Every human soul must face the destroyer. Watch against him; pray; keep him out!

Charles J. Keppel

THE WOMEN'S PAGE

What about divorce?

by Mrs. Henry Carlson
St. Paul, Minn.

When I was asked to write on the subject of divorce, I wondered how I would even begin. I am not going to try to handle the difficult questions that are only for mature, experienced counselors or pastors. I shall sit here at my typewriter and hope and pray I can write something from God's heart to yours as to what should be our attitude toward divorce and as to how we who love the Lord should treat the divorced person.

My heart goes out with deep feelings to the divorced people, especially to the ones who did not want a separation. I have travelled that lonely road with dear Christian friends who have pleaded, begged, shed floods of tears, read books and more books, sought advice from pastors, counselors and lawyers, prayed many whole nights, and requested prayer from friends. Yet after that long trail of anguish have had to face the divorce courts anyway and have found themselves numbly staring at their names in the "divorce granted" column of the newspaper.

First of all, let us simply state that God is against divorce. It is not His plan. I don't need to write this truth—it is too obvious in Scripture that what "God has joined together, let no man separate." (Matt. 19:6). His thoughts for us are always thoughts of peace and love and not of evil.

Can we who are women do *something* to try to help stop the stream of divorce? Yes, we can. Remember, "a stitch in time saves nine." We, as parents, grandparents, Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, can aim first, by example, and secondly, by words to teach God's truth from His Word either in a classroom or in casual conversation. We can emphasize these Truths: (1) God has a good plan (Jer. 29:11-13); (2) He guides (Jn. 7:17, Ps. 25); (3) Just as He prepared a

beautiful woman to be the wife of Isaac (Gen. 24), so God has the best partner for each of His children; (4) He is able to bring those two together; and (5) He will supply all the love and patience that is needed for every adjustment (Phil. 4:19). These assurances and many others will bring security and blessing not only to mother and father but to all the children, the church and the world. God is glorified through godly homes.

It is sad so many homes are broken because of sin. Pride, selfishness and lust claim the throne of the heart of man when there is little or no surrender to the Savior. Man then becomes a slave to his passions. But it need not be! Divorce is never a must where the two partners are yielded to Christ and are ready to be in His school of learning to claim the green pastures of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness (Gal. 5:22).

"Can we who are women do something to try to help stop the stream of divorce?"

It is true no two Christian people always think alike but through faith in God and the patience of Christ every disagreement can become a springboard for new growth in likeness to our Lord Jesus (Matt. 11:29). Stubbornness and pride must be daily put on the cross and the beautiful gift of godly repentance must be sought after with our whole heart. It is *only* this "sorrow that is according to the will of God" (II Cor. 7:10) that changes the heart and makes us easy to live with. Diligent searching of the word each day and humble, sincere prayer are a *must* in order to experience the daily victory over the temptations of

the devil and our own sinful flesh. I Peter 3 is helpful to meditate upon often.

I think of one couple who struggled without Jesus as Lord for years. Selfishness and stubbornness caused many heartaches. At last they felt there was no way out except divorce. Oh, the emptiness and loneliness when it was all over. A friend advised Mary to shut herself up in her room and read her Bible as if it were written just to her and no one else. She spent eight days reading, searching and praying. Her eyes were opened to the truth of her own pride and rebellion. She also felt the Savior's love for her through the Word. With excitement and obvious sincerity she shared her new discoveries with her ex-husband. He listened. He, too, tasted and found that the Lord is good and within one month they were remarried. There have been problems, of course, but now, 40 years later, they are still together serving and loving the same Lord whom to know is life eternal, peace and joy.

What about those who are divorced? Bill Gothard advises from God's Word, "If we really want to help divorced people, we must help them meet their three most basic needs: ridding themselves of guilt, ridding themselves of bitterness, and finding God's purpose for their lives."

Surely we ought to be very understanding to those who are suffering from a broken relationship. I believe rejection hurts more than death itself. Think how much God suffers from divorce. Millions have divorced Him. The Christian mate who did not want the divorce has the blessing of knowing a little of the feeling of rejection that Jesus Himself feels so often.

Christ is the best therapy in all the world. He will bind up deep wounds. Encourage the children involved to open their hearts and tell God how badly they hurt. God becomes a father to the fatherless (Ps. 68:5). He is the kind Good Shepherd. Whether the separation is from a parent or a mate, as we bring our burdens to the Lord we can claim the promise offered us by Him in Matthew 11: 28-30. Jesus is truly our burden bearer.

CAMPUS NEWS

Why Attend AFLBS?

Worried? Feeling kind of inadequate? A world lies ahead—"but I'm not ready!" News! God has given His Word that you might be. Below are only a few ways in which God is preparing His people at AFLBS . . . for a LIFE!

Preparation for life!



farmer

Genus: *Likus Dirtius*
Alias: *Country Sunshine, Boondocks, Meat n' Potatoes, Essential*
Task: *Feed them, lead them, pray for them and send them.*

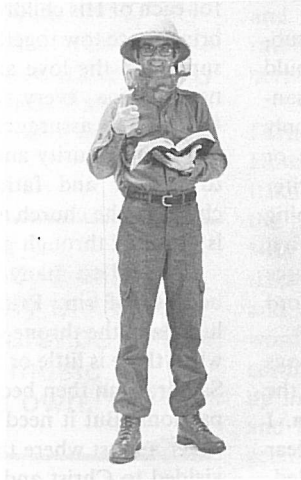
Model: *Phil Lofthus*
Home: *McVille, N. Dak.*
"I came to Bible School because I was sick of living life for myself. I had no direction. I didn't know what I wanted in life. At AFLBS I found the direction. After two quarters I know I want to serve the Lord for the rest of my life. I'm not sure just exactly how the Lord will use me, but I *do* know that He will use me in His way."



mother

Genus: *Maternii Bestium*
Alias: *Ma, Mom, Where's lunch?, Blessed.*
Task: *Love them, mold them, train them and have them!*

Model: *Marlys Twedt*
Home: *McHenry, N. Dak.*
"Being at AFLBS has helped me to be able to look at Scripture and apply it to my life. That is the biggest thing I have learned at Bible School. We have to trust in Him and be in His Word to be able to face everyday situations. As far as my future goes, it has helped me to see the importance of putting Jesus Christ first in any place we take in life."



missionary

Genus: *Gotelli Gospelus*
Alias: *Gringo, Chosen, Sent One, Willing.*
Task: *Befriend them, care for them, tell them and disciple them!*

Model: *Reuben Unseth*
Home: *Bismarck, N. Dak.*
"AFLBS is helping me to better understand God through His Word. This is essential if I am to communicate the Gospel as a missionary. I desired a school where I could concentrate on Scripture study. I also chose AFLBS out of loyalty—it offers me a great opportunity to serve the church which nourished me in Jesus."



teacher

Genus: *Makum Discipulus*
Alias: *Yes Ma'am, No Ma'am, Anything you say, Ma'am, Friend.*
Task: *Teach them, love them, scold them and "bless them!"*

Model: *Jeannette Hanson*
Home: *Ferndale, Wash.*
"I wasn't sure of what God wanted me to do for the rest of my life and Bible School was the best place to help me find out.
"Working with children in the church is a desire of mine. Through special classes at AFLBS I have learned how to work with children and present the Gospel to them in a clear way."

—James Lydell Johnson

Spring Quarter Dates to note

Campus Days—March 26-28
Choral Club Tour—March 31-April 8
Choir Tour—April 10-24

Youth Rally—May 1
Choral Club/Choir Concert—May 9
Graduation—May 21

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

What is God's plan with the world—II

by Martin Hegland

Therefore there comes to Christian young people of today the high "Challenge of God to Modern Youth." Phrased in the burning words of the Spirit-fired Paul, it resounds in our ears: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:1-2).

Oh, that there might be conveyed to us something of the scope, something of the love, something of the wonder, something of the glory of God's great plan. There is not one moment of time, past, present, or future; there is no individual human being that ever lived or shall live; there is no nation great or small; there is not one dollar of wealth anywhere in all the world that is not potentially embraced within the scope of God's plan.

With universal sweep the apostle Paul pictures the all-embracing love of God, "who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." In His compassionate concern for the souls of men God would summon into His service all Christians on the face of the earth, with all their talents and all their wealth, for a world-sweeping enterprise to bring the saving Gospel of the Christ to all peoples upon whom rest the shadows of spiritual ignorance. More significant that all industrial enterprises put together, more vast than all the transportation facilities of the world, more precious than all the bank deposits of the continents, supreme among all the international problems, stand the interests of the Kingdom of God. The establishment of right relations of men to God and

fellowmen constitutes the paramount issue of this and every age.

Some day, in God's own time, His plan shall be carried to completion. With inspired vision John saw the time when the redemptive process shall have come to fruition, when the forces of truth shall have completely triumphed, when God's great plan shall have culminated, when "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever."

Young friend, can you contemplate the future without having your life in some fashion related to God's great plan?

In the presence of the transcendent prospect of being a part of and having a share in this wondrous program, do you dare to live in sin? Do you dare to fritter away your precious life in meaningless amusements? Do you dare to let worldliness make you indifferent to the claims of God? Do you dare to listen to the voices that would tempt you to unbelief? Do you dare to give heed to the allurements that would lead you astray into the ways of shame and grief? Do you dare to close your ears to the voice of God pleading with you to present yourself a living sacrifice upon the altar of dedication? Do you dare to live selfishly when men, women, and children all about you are dying for lack of the saving service you can render by the grace of God?

Oh, that the Holy Spirit might convict us of our sins of selfishness, unbelief, indifference, and disobedience! Oh, that He might lead us to the cross to see our blessed Lord dying to save us! Oh, that He might open our eyes to see the beauty of the consecrated life! Oh, that He might reveal to us the greatness and glory of God's plan for the world! And, oh that He might lay hold of our hearts with such power that we would sincerely present ourselves as living sacrifices for the advancement of His redemptive program!

No one can measure the possibilities

of a young soul in union with Christ. Out of such fellowship may come visions that shall change the course of many lives; and impulses be released that shall send men to the ends of the earth with the transforming Gospel. Out of such fellowship some future Christian teacher may receive inspiration for a service that will make hearts glow with enthusiasm for God's cause; some future Christian statesman may receive an impetus to a career that will change the history of the world into closer harmony with the will of God; some future Christian business man may receive such love to God in his heart that he shall bring great wealth to the feet of his Savior to be used for the building of the eternal temple.

Young Christians today face a high privilege and a holy responsibility—the privilege of great visions; the possibility of transcendent decisions.

The son of a government radio operator had an amateur outfit by which he often talked with his father. One day in a fit of anger the boy struck his instrument and broke it. The father tried to call his boy, but there was no response. he called and called, but there was no answer.

Dear friends, the voice of our heavenly Father is all about us calling us. He is sending out calls of warning, calls of invitation, calls of pardon, calls for holiness, calls for consecration, calls for service.

If by foolishness, disobedience, or unbelief we have broken our spiritual radio apparatus, oh, may the Holy Spirit repair the damage and attune our souls again to God so that we shall hear His loving calls, yield our lives to His dominion, and be enlisted in the holy enterprise of advancing His great plan!

—From *Problems of Young Christians*

by Martin Hegland,

Augsburg Publishing House.

Next time: How May I Know Whether or Not I am a Christian?

MUSIC . . .

pray." No question, it's much easier to sing standing and the sound is considerably better. It's not a coincidence that the Lutheran Church likes to have the congregation stand for as much as half of a worship—the opening hymn, the reading of the Word, the prayers, the closing hymn and benediction. The service was thoughtfully designed to give us every advantage while we do our joyful duty and that includes standing to sing at nearly every opportunity.

With our evangelist youth worker

Springtime is the time for planting our fields in the hope of a harvest. In God's work, it is always the time for planting and for harvest. Evangelist Kenneth Pentti is travelling throughout our church doing this very thing. Pray for the services which are scheduled in these coming months.

Bemidji, Minn.

Bethany Lutheran Church
Mar. 21-25
R. S. Persson, pastor

Spicer, Minn.

Green Lake Lutheran Church
Apr. 4-8
Dennis Gray, pastor

Brandon, Minn.

Chippewa Lutheran Church
Apr. 18-20
Gordon L. Grage, pastor

Burnsville, Minn.

Minnesota Valley Lutheran Church
Apr. 25-29
Ralph Tjelta, pastor

Fargo, N. Dak.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
May 2-6
John P. Strand, pastor

Brodhead, Wis.

Bethany Lutheran Church
May 16-20
Kenneth Thoreson, pastor

Ontonagon, Mich.

Redeemer Lutheran Church
May 23-27
James Fugleberg, pastor

Hymn of the Month

We can sing a favorite hymn for years without knowing what it means or teaches. We sing melodies and rhythms, not serious thoughts and the intimacies of our hearts; thus the act becomes routine. So the hymn is uncomprehended, and if it's one of praise, it's not truly proffered; if it's one of prayer, it's not really contemplated; if it's one of thanksgiving, it's not actually rendered or meant; if it's one of compassion, we do not empathize; and if it's one of salvation, we do not lay hold of it.

It is all wasted? Is this objective practice simply cold orthodoxy? Would it be better to sing to something which would provoke a feeling, a sentiment, a chill, a reverie, goosebumps?

Hans Nielsen Hauge was born and nurtured in a pious Christian home and was a faithful attendant at church all his life. He had his moment of truth with the Holy Spirit at age 25 as he sang a 200-year-old hymn he had learned as a youth.

Jesus, for Thee and Thy Blessed
communion

Longing possesses my heart and my
mind;

New congregation organizes at Stanley

At a worship service on January 24th, forty-three adults signed the charter of Our Savior's Lutheran Church at Stanley, North Dakota. It is the AFLC's newest home mission congregation and has been holding services since midsummer, 1981.

Following the signing of the charter, the congregation met together for a fellowship dinner and their first annual meeting. Decisions were made concerning the calling of a pastor and the possibility of building a new church this summer. Election of officers was also a major item of business at that meeting.

Mr. Gary Jorgenson, a senior at AFLTS, has been serving the congregation on an every-other-week schedule since last fall. Neighboring AFLC pastors have shared preaching responsibilities on alternate Sundays.

Break down all barriers that hinder
our union,
Draw me to Thee, O Redeemer most
kind!

As he sang this prayer, God revealed Himself; objectivity nourished subjectivity. In Hauge's own words, "My heart was so uplifted to God that I don't know nor can I express what happened in my soul; it was a glory to tongue can explain; my soul felt something supernatural, divine and blessed. I had a sorrow over sins and a burning desire that others should share this same grace."

When the truth of a hymn is finally understood by us, when its reality is revealed, it becomes a spectacular spiritual growth for the singer, and the spiritual experience, the Christian experience, is as different and far removed from the "mellow" experience or the therapeutic experience as the hymn is from the jingle or drone. Therefore, we must resist the temptation to sing down, to use the simplistic and repetitious drones for mellowing the mind in a way similar to therapeutic institutional use.

A program that brings to light the strengths and intentions and background of a hymn can vastly increase Christian empathy and awareness. Whether one a month or one for each of the church festivals (Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter/Ascension, Pentecost), select a hymn appropriate to the season and focus on the author, composer and general circumstances surrounding its inspiration, birth and background. Present it to the congregation as a bulletin insert or from the pulpit, which is even more effective.

The music for the hymn can be introduced as the Prelude or as an in-

Personalities

Rev. Robert Rieth, a former pastor of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Kirkland, Wash., has been removed from the AFLC clergy roster at his own request. Pastor Rieth is national director of Fellowship of Christians in the Arts, Media and Entertainment (FCAME).

Rev. Herbert L. Franz, Cloquet, Minn., spoke at special meetings in Faith and Stillwater Lutheran Churches, Kalispell, Mont., Feb. 14-21. The local pastors are Richard Bartholomew and Dale Mellgren, respectively.

The Lutheran Ambassador

strumental solo during the offering or as a vocal solo, but it's important that it be heard by the congregation as well as sung by them. Perhaps the best of all introductions is one by the children's choir, and once they know it, there's no need for such a program in the next generation.

The great hymns, alongside the Bible, are the best teachers, and it behooves us to study them occasionally so that when we sing, we sing with the heart and with the mind also.

All arts and sciences but one die with us when we die. Medicine, Law, Business, Agriculture, Education—there'll be no need for doctors, lawyers, bankers, farmers or teachers in heaven. But music is the one craft that is unceasing and what we have learned on earth we will be able to practice in heaven as we praise and glorify God in singing.

Acoustics

Do what you can to make the sanctuary good for singing. A live acoustical environment is an absolute necessity. Without it, many people won't sing, and the most important function of the congregation, that being rendering its musical offerings to the Lord, will be absent.

Well intentioned as it may be to make the church as comfortable and luxurious as their homes, the plush and intimate atmosphere of the living-room is altogether incompatible with the necessity that everyone sing. Carpeting on the floor and accoustical tile on the ceiling absorb not only the sounds of shuffling feet, coughing and children crying, they also dampen the enthusiasm and drain the congregation's vocal energy as it tries to sing. The self-conscious will quit altogether because they hear only themselves and don't like what they hear.

A nave that is sufficiently reverberant for spiritual singing can be easily adapted for public speaking. However, a nave that has been accoustically "treated" to favor the speaking voice and a "hushed" atmosphere has been ruined for effective singing. Not including the Confession, Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, the congregation's only part in worship is sung. For their sake, hard ceiling, hard walls and hard floor (no carpet). It's not worth the high cost of worshipers not singing.

The Bible Conferences

"God's Rest in Times of Trouble" was the theme for the Bible Conferences this winter, held at three locations, Valley City, N. Dak., Feb. 10-13, Osceola, Wis., Feb. 17-20, and Astoria, Ore., Feb. 26-28. The theme Scripture was Hebrews 4:1-11.

The evening speakers were Rev. Leslie Galland (Valley City), Rev. Dennis Gray (Osceola) and Rev. Kenneth Pentti (Astoria).

The Bible studies in Galatians were given by Rev. Philip Rokke at Valley City and by Rev. Ralph Tjelta at the Association Retreat Center in Osceola. Due to the shorter time allowed for the conference in Astoria, no Bible studies as such were held there.

The conference theme was subdivided into five parts. "Our Great Need for Rest" was considered by Rev. John Strand (Valley City), Rev. Stephen Odegaard (Astoria) and Rev. Paul Nash (Osceola). Rev. Wesley Langaas (Valley City), Rev. Ronald Knutson (Astoria) and Rev. James Fugleberg (Osceola) lectured on "The Foundation for Rest."

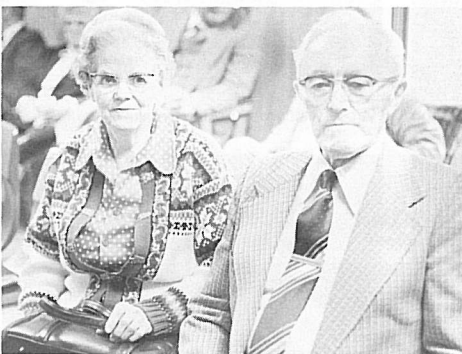
Rev. Bruce Dalager (Valley City), Pastor Knutson (Astoria) and Rev. Richard Gilmore (Osceola) spoke on "God's Rest in Trials and Afflictions," while "God's Rest in Times of Affluence" was the subject of Rev. Robert Lewis (Valley City) and Lay Pastor Roger Krueger (Osceola). Someone from Lake Stevens, Wash., spoke on the topic at Astoria.

The final presentations were made by Rev. Ragene Hodnefield (Valley City), Rev. Alvin Grothe (Astoria) and Rev. Gordon L. Grage (Osceola) on the topic, "Rest Eternally in Christ."

A Women's Missionary Federation workshop was held in connection with the Valley City and Astoria conferences. Simultaneously with the one in Valley City, many of the men ate supper at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Warren Jensen.

Host pastors for the conferences this year were Rev. Curtis Emerson (Valley City), Rev. Michael Brandt (Osceola) and Pastor Grothe (Astoria).

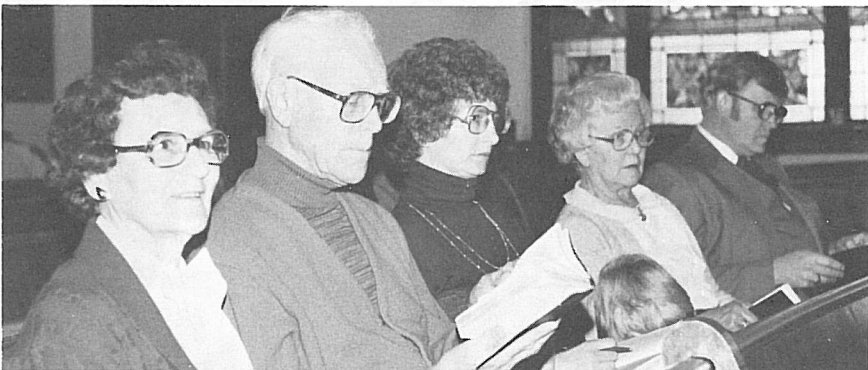
This is the second year that conferences were held in three locations.



Rev. and Mrs. Carl Stendal



Mr. Eldor Sorkness



A session at Valley City

More scenes
from the
conferences . . .



Rev. Curtis Emerson



WMF Officers, Mrs. J. Strand and Mrs. K. Anderson



Those welcomed coffee breaks



Rev. Leslie Galland and Rev. Einar Unseth



Rev. Gordon Grage chatted with Pastor and Mrs. Amos Dyrud