

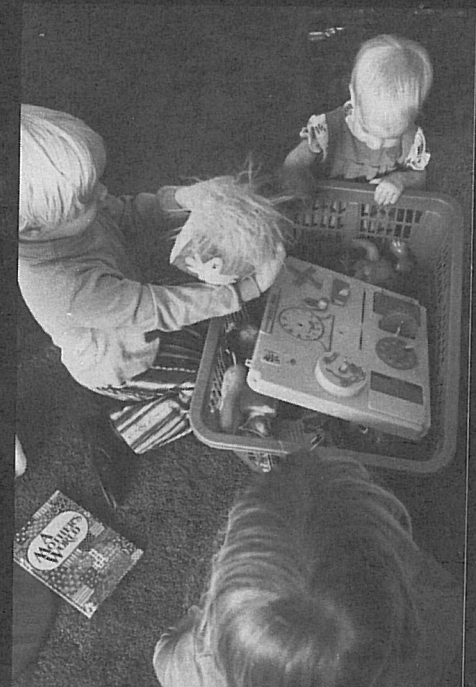
May 1, 1979

# The Lutheran Ambassador



*Christian mothers,  
sing your praise  
Through all your busy,  
happy days  
To God, our Father, kind and  
good,  
For all the joys of  
Motherhood.*

*M. K. Fraser*



# MEDITATION MOMENTS

## *Motherhood*

In Genesis 2:21-24, we read, "The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." This was the beginning of a very special creation by God. Genesis 3:20 states that "Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living." Now we see the purpose of this special creation of God, *motherhood*. "Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord" (Genesis 4:1). Eve set the stage for true appreciation of the gift of children. They are a blessing from the Lord, not a curse, an accident or a mistake, as we so often hear. God knows each tiny fetus, and considers it a gift to that woman, a gift that she will nurture and bring to the throne of grace in prayer.

Not only had Eve been faithful in giving birth to Cain and Abel and raising these blessings from God, but she dili-

gently taught them about God and the ways of worship. Thank God for mothers who are concerned about the spiritual training of their children. Their efforts may not always reap the rewards they would like, as in the experience of Eve. In his worship, Cain didn't place his teachings in the right order and a great tragedy resulted, the untimely death of Abel and the exile of Cain. How this must have torn at the heart of Eve; we can suppose she cried out to God, as many have done through the centuries, "Why, Lord?" Eve's sorrow was eased by the joyous arrival of a new son, Seth. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

The account of Hannah in I Samuel 1 is one of the most beautiful on motherhood. First, we find Hannah barren, a victim of abuse because of her barrenness. It was a shame to not have children, for this was the God-given purpose of woman. After Hannah had made a commitment to the Lord, He opened her womb and she bare a son. Joy filled Hannah's being, but she had made a commitment and she must keep her part also. When the boy Samuel was old enough to leave her, Hannah brought him to the house of the Lord, to remain there all his days. Samuel became the greatest of the judg-

es, ruling his people long and well. She never forsook Samuel but visited him yearly, bringing gifts. Because of her faithfulness, the Lord blessed her with three sons and two daughters (I Samuel 2:21). The Lord does not forget the faithful mothers, but blesses them with riches untold.

We have been looking at motherhood from the bright and Godly side, but the Bible also shows us another side of motherhood. In the Books of Kings we read of a king named Ahab and his wife Jezebel. She was the daughter of royalty, but served other gods. Her main concern was achieving power and fame. Her arch enemy was the Prophet Elijah, who persisted in pointing out the evil of her ways. She threatened death to Elijah, fear grasped him and he fled. Jezebel continued in her highhanded and ungodly ways, until God saw fit to bring her life to a horrible end, an end that was brought on by her own son.

As we look at motherhood and what God meant it to be, it is disturbing to see the seemingly increasing number of Jezebels. We thank God for women like Eve and Hannah, who still believe in and practice true motherhood today.

—Philip Featherstone

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# The great maternal adventure

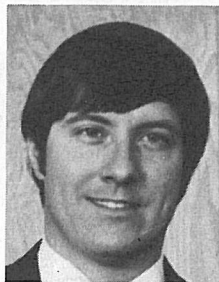
Chapter 31 of the book of Proverbs is well known for its description of a virtuous woman. Verses 1-9 contain the oracle of a mother to her son, King Lemuel. She is giving counsel to her son and it is her desire that he be strong, compassionate, and judge righteously. As Lemuel honored his mother by telling others what his mother taught him, so we set aside a special day to honor our mothers for who they are and what they have given and done for us: their sacrificial love, care, discipline, instruction and counsel.

In verse two this mother made a strong claim on motherhood by saying, "O son of my womb." Birth, what a miracle! I was with my wife as both of our children were being born and am in awe of God's plan and creation. It begins in pain, Genesis 3:16: "Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children." Our Lord shared, in John 16:21, "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world." In this case a man, but in general a *child* of "my womb." It's a miracle before our eyes that brings forth the maternal instinct of joy that forgets the sorrow and anguish leading up to the birth, or at least makes it all worth while.

Thus begins the great maternal adventure. As you begin to know this little one, his personality, with his total dependence upon you, his mother, you begin to cherish this little one from birth. As you bear this child to your breasts and watch over his infancy and childhood with sedulous care, as you shield him as much as possible from all danger and feed and clothe him there comes the bond of motherhood. This child will teach you much patience and understanding.

A Christian mother spends many hours in prayer for her children. Lemuel's mother referred to him as "the son of my vows." To put it another

by Pastor Jay Eberth,  
Chassell, Mich.



way, "the son of my many prayers." Hannah, another great mother from our Bible, is another example. In 1 Samuel 1:10, we read that she prayed "in bitterness of soul" for a son. She then vowed that if the Lord would "look on the affliction of thine handmaid" and give her a son that she would give him back to the Lord. When the priest told her to "go in peace," we are told she gave praise and "her countenance was no more sad." In other words she believed God that her prayers were answered. Hannah did have a son, Samuel, and I'm sure her prayers didn't stop but continued as he grew up and as he ministered to the Lord in the temple. Therefore, Christian mothers do find time for prayer on behalf of their children and claim the promise of Matthew 21:22, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

The mother of Lemuel had a great vision or high calling for her son. His name means dedicated to God in Hebrew. As Lemuel's mother and Hannah dedicated their sons to the Lord and to His service, so we as Christian mothers and fathers can bring our children to the Lord and dedicate them to His plan and high calling for their lives.

Along with prayer and dedication comes teaching. Hebrew parents were aware of this responsibility through the law as stated in Deuteronomy 6:5-8, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by thy way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." So with teaching the Scriptures goes an active living love for the Lord, seen in our lives. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go . . .," which involves leading him to a personal relationship with Christ as the Savior and Lord of his life at as early an age as possible. Also, the verb "to train up" occurs only three other times in the Scriptures, and each time it is translated "to dedicate." It was used of Solomon's dedicating the Temple, and so it means "to set aside for spiritual purposes."

Many great men have been richly blessed by what they have learned at their mother's knee. We're told in Proverbs 1:8 "My son . . . forsake not the law of thy mother." God has given mothers special love and abilities in order to bring out our greatness if we will just listen to them and heed what they teach us.

Susannah Wesley, for example, spent one hour each day praying for her 18 children. In addition, she took each child aside for a full hour every week to discuss spiritual matters with him or her. It's no wonder Charles and John were such great men of God. Here are a few rules she followed in training her children:

1. Subdue self-will in a child and thus work together with God to save his soul.
2. Teach him to pray as soon as he can speak.

## MOTHER . . .

3. Give him nothing he cries for and only what is good for him if he asks for it politely.
4. To prevent lying, punish no fault which is freely confessed, but never allow a rebellious, sinful act to go unnoticed.
5. Commend and reward good behavior.
6. Strictly observe all promises you have made to your child."

A biblical picture of this child-training process is seen in Paul's words to Timothy, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also" (II Tim. 1:5). A godly grandmother communicated to her daughter, who in turn communicated to Timothy. The

mother laid a spiritual fire in the early years by her life.

So, mothers, if you want great sons and daughters then listen to God, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all your heart, mind and soul. Repent of sin daily. Place your children in God's hands as you believe and obey His Word. Young people, if you want to be great, then listen to your mother. Continue to love her through life and when she is old provide for her needs. Remember she is one of God's representatives here on earth and to despise her would be to despise God. Reread the Fourth Commandment and its meaning. We are called to honor, serve, obey, love and esteem our mothers.

Mother, this Mother's Day we honor you and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your selflessness, giving, concern and love. For these may you be blessed.

MOTHER AND CHILD  
By Mary Cassatt  
RNS Photo

### MOTHER KNOWS

Nobody knows of the work it makes  
To keep the home together;  
Nobody knows of the steps it takes,  
Nobody knows but Mother;  
Nobody listens to childish woes,  
Which kisses only smother;  
Nobody's pain'd by the mighty blow,

Nobody,—only Mother.  
Nobody knows of the sleepless care  
Bestowed on baby brother;  
Nobody knows of the tender pray'r,  
Nobody knows but Mother;  
Nobody knows of the lessons taught,  
Of loving one another;

Nobody knows of the patience sought,  
Nobody,—only Mother.  
Nobody knows of the anxious fears,  
Lest darlings may not weather  
Storms of this life in the coming years,  
Nobody knows but Mother;  
Nobody knows of the tears that start,

The grief she gladly smother;  
Nobody knows of the breaking heart,  
Nobody,—only Mother.  
Nobody clings to the wayward child,  
Tho' scorned by ev'ry other,  
Leads it so gently from pathways wild,  
Nobody can but Mother;  
Nobody knows of the hourly pray'r,  
For him our erring brother,  
Pride of her heart, once so pure and fair,

Nobody,—only Mother.

Author Unknown  
(Sent in by T. F. Dahle, Sr.)

by Esther Farrier  
Kenyon, Minnesota

1979—Modern man teeters on the edge of extinction. And Christ, the Risen One, Reality Himself, seeks to make Himself known to *His own*. His invitation still is, "Come." Come for cleansing, come for light. Come and learn of love. Come, while there is time, to Reality.

1979—and those who have been redeemed from the suffocating shadows look back with desire at the covering they seemingly afforded. The light of reality is blinding and embarrassingly revealing. And the promised Bride turns from her Beloved to flirt surreptitiously with unreality. Conscience rises to condemn, but there is a well-memorized defense: "It is the business-like thing to do."

1979—and all the world is crazily, feverishly at work erecting towers—Towers of Babel, circa late Twentieth Century. Patchwork towers of unreality. And the builders say to their towers, even as they crumble before unseeing eyes, "You are reality, you are that in which we find security."



# Modern towers of Babel

"... as we feverishly build our tottering towers of things which are unreal, we ignore Reality Himself."

America's modern Tower of Babel—built of huge slabs of pressed labor-savers cemented with myriad-hued insurance, and finished with a hard, shiny varnish of culture and brotherhood—has not reached the heights promised by the prophets of Mammon. Rumor insists that we are living in that frustrating state of continually falling short. Satisfaction and security just elude our fingertips as we stretch painfully from a tiptoe position on our tower. Our tower is unreal, and terribly insecure. But it is *our* tower, and so we loyally and doggedly proclaim its stability and beauty to all.

Those who have eyes to see will recognize other towers which loom up all around. Just ahead, wearing a cloud-crown of gloom and fog, is the Tower of Church Life. It is of great dimensions, with two huge boulders, beautifully carved and painted, forming the base. Soft lights play over them as soft music acts as mood-establisher, and we notice that the boulders are labeled Easter and Christmas. On these two rocks teeter stones of lesser girth, equally beautiful. All are held together loosely by a sticky binder, one part sentimentality and two parts confusion. On closer inspection the boulders of which this tower is built prove to be hollow. Lovely shells encasing emptiness. Unreality.

On the Tower of Church Life multitudes of beautifully-costumed creatures recline in apparent ease and satisfaction, dutifully rising from time to time to perform certain rites. They have the appearance of sleepwalkers dancing a weird, stiff-legged dance with perfect precision.

A little to the right of the Tower of Church Life is a somewhat less imposing structure, the Tower of Christian

Living. It has been built with that brittle, flint-like material, Pride, the old forerunner of the Fall, as the Foundation. Poorly constructed of wood, hay and stubble, this tower has been heavily plastered on the outside with rough conformity. Here and there a crack appears in the plaster from which protrude filthy rags. This tower is a cold, noisy place, and you come away with the impression that every inhabitant desires to be the star performer. "Look at me!" they call out, like little boys in front of company.

Over in the left background is another tower boldly identifying itself by means of a huge sign as the Tower of Missionary Activity. This tower has a quaint, old-fashioned look about it—a sort of "daisy chain" appearance. Second-hand materials have been used here altogether, and there has been much patching. It is out of plumb, off balance. But it is a busy place! There are teas and skits and awards and candlelighting and singing continuously.

On the Tower of Missionary Activity some people are patiently laying used brick while others encourage them with a pat on the back. But something is amiss, for the tower remains the same in size however many bricks are added. As we press forward to see better, we can identify the shadowy bulk at the foot of the tower as a pile of rubble. Then we understand that the bricklayers are using no cement and the rough bricks slide off to the ground, making the work of the masons unfruitful in the extreme. Off to one side, almost completely covered with debris and rubbish, is a large bag labeled LOVE. No one on the tower knows about this cement, evidently, for they go on as before.

Looking around us at the maze of towers, and understanding something of their emptiness, uselessness, hypocrisy, we are forced to the question, Where, then, is reality to be found? Where the security which human hearts so long for?

The answer is, As near as the door to that human heart, as close as its willingness. For Christ says, Behold, I stand at that door and seek admittance.

And Christ is Reality. Christ is Security. He it is Who lends reality to all the universes. By Him all things hold together. Everything apart from Him is dead, unreal—and pathetically insecure.

The tragedy of our day, 1979, is that as we feverishly build our tottering towers of things which are unreal, we ignore Reality Himself. Christ is Real and His resurrection is the only guarantee available to humanity of genuine existence, eternal life. How sad, tragic, insane! for the Church or the Christian to look to the towers being built of temporal material by temporal hands while ignoring that eternal Temple, Jesus Christ, Who is Life and Eternity and Reality.

# Turn your eyes upon Jesus

"Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace."

The words of this beautiful chorus tell us in such simple words the cause of our stumbling and erring. By indicating where we go wrong, they also point out how we can get back on track once again.

From the beginning, it seems that the eye of man has been a constant source of trouble to him. In Genesis 3:5-7, we read that it was the eyes that were opened showing man to be like God, being able to know the difference between bad and good. It was when the woman saw that the tree of life was good from which to obtain food, to make one intelligent, that she took and ate. Finally, their eyes were opened and they could both see that they were naked.

The misuse of the eye gets us into all sorts of trouble in our day-to-day lives. First of all, we see—then comes the chain reaction of thought, and then things really get rolling. We get to desiring things for which we probably have no need. Maybe it is just too costly or possibly it can never belong to us because it already belongs to another. Possessions, power, people, particular gifts, places, and so we could go on and on. In Luke 11:34, we are told by Jesus Himself, that the "eye is the lamp of your body: when your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light; but when it is not sound, your body is full of darkness."

When Jesus was leaving the city of Jericho and the crowd was pressing in on Him from every side, He took time to speak to the two blind men who had been trying so hard to get His attention (Matthew 20:32-34). Jesus said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened." Our daily prayer should be that He would keep our eyes open, and in keeping them open, keep them always on Him.

It seems that it is only when we look away from Jesus that we stumble and fall. We try to make it on our own; we look with the "eye" in a direction other than on Jesus and so surely get drawn off course.

By constantly turning our spiritual eyes on Jesus, by keeping them "locked in" on Him, earth's problems, desires and sins will indeed diminish in comparison to His glory and grace. Our ever constant goal must be as with the disciples, "to see no one but Jesus only."

Robert F. Kennedy  
San Angelo, Texas

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## *His mother is a Christian*

Central Park is a stone's throw from the office.

And while strolling along 61st Street, a young man approached me and asked for a quarter. He was honest. He told me he wanted a drink of wine.

I could easily tell by looking at him that he had not had a warm bed or a good home-cooked meal for a long time. Yet as I stood near him I sensed something strangely different.

I asked him to join me on the bench for a chat before I would put some money into his hand.

I asked him about his life.

I wasn't amazed. His speech had betrayed him. There was something special about him. He was brought up in a Christian home.

He told me of his Christian mother . . . how she loved him and loved Jesus. He told me how she would sit at

his bedside at night and tell him the stories of Jesus. How she would open her small apartment for the people in the neighborhood who didn't have food . . . and how they would often join them for supper. He told me she was a choir member . . . and would teach him all the songs.

We sang a bit together . . . right there on the park bench. One of his favorites was "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior."

We prayed, too. He told God how "he hated what sin had made out of him . . . and that he needed strength to turn back and go straight."

I prayed with him. And I prayed for his mother. I thanked God for the example she had been to him. The Word she taught him. The songs that she sang with him. And the Scriptures they memorized.

"The Word she taught  
became alive  
. . . through her example"

My heart cried as I left that scene. But my heart smiled, too.

God's Word couldn't be washed out of his memory. Bible teaching was still a part of him—a small part, true. But a part nevertheless.

Even in the midst of his battle with the bottle he was very much aware of his praying mother . . . and the teaching of the Scripture.

Sunday is Mother's Day.

A day that is put aside to remember . . . and appreciate Mother. I thank the Lord for my mother. Her teachings . . . loving patience . . . and Godly example placed me on the right track so many times.

The Word she taught became alive  
. . . through her example.

Y. R. Kindberg, Pres.  
from a New York International  
Bible Society letter





# Happy Acres



## THE HOUSE WITH EYES

It was time for another of Dad's stories, and this one, he promised, was about some folks who lived in the House With Eyes.

"Out west on the banks of the Missouri river, in a place that is now flooded by the Garrison Dam reservoir, there was once an Indian village called Like-a-Fish-Hook. Close by was an army post, Fort Berthold.

"Many years ago, before railroads were built out this way, paddle-wheeled steamers used to sail up and down the Missouri river carrying soldiers and army supplies to the forts along the river. These steamers also carried gold prospectors and hunters and explorers. Back in the summer of 1876, a young missionary and his bride came up on a river steamer and they got off at Fort Berthold.

"More than a thousand Indians lived at Like-a-Fish-Hook village nearby. And a lot of them stood watching as this young Charles Hall got off the steamer. They watched this missionary with unfriendly faces—because most of the white people these Indians had known had treated them unjustly. The Indians looked so unfriendly that the captain of the boat said to Missionary Hall, 'You'd better take my gun, or those Indians will kill you.'

"But Mr. Hall answered, 'My weapon is the Word of God.'

"Hall built his own little house close to Like-a-Fish-Hook village. And because it had windows, the Indians called it the House With Eyes. These Indians would come right up to the windows and look right inside at the Hall family.

"It was hard for Mr. Hall to learn the Indians' language, and the Indians were slow to make friends with him. But when a baby was born to the Halls, Mrs. Hall put the baby into the baby carriage, and the Halls promenaded with it among the big round earth lodges in the Indian village. The Indian mothers and children crowded around to see the little white baby and they all smiled. From that time on, the Indians were more friendly.

"But no matter how often Missionary Hall would invite them, none of the Indian children would come inside the House With Eyes for a visit.

"Then an old Indian chief called White Shield told Hall, 'If you will feed the children, they will come to your house like flies after syrup.' So the Halls prepared a good meal, and invited the children. From then on, the children would come to the House With Eyes, especially when there was something to eat, and Missionary Hall would then teach them about Jesus.

"For sixty years, Reverend Hall lived with the Indians and became their entrusted friend. They built their churches where he could come and preach to them.

"And you know, that summer that Missionary Hall came to Like-a-Fish-Hook village, General Custer went out to meet the Sioux Indians in Montana with swords and guns and he and all his men were killed by the Indians. Mr. Hall came out to meet the Indians in Christian love—his only weapon was the Word of God, and he lived peacefully and happily with the Indians to the end of his life.

"Missionary Hall knew that three things will always last—that's faith, hope, and love, and he knew that 'the greatest of these is love' " (I Cor. 13:13).

"Yes," Mom added, "and Hall brought with him 'the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God' " (Eph. 6:17).

## FAMILY DISCUSSION

1. Why were the Indians first suspicious and unfriendly toward Missionary Hall?
2. If you had been an Indian at Like-a-Fish-Hook village, would you have felt the same way toward the missionary as others there felt?
3. It is not fair to judge all people of a certain race by the way some of their race may behave. When we meet people of another race, how may we avoid making the same mistakes in judging them as these Indians made when they first met and judged Missionary Hall? (I Peter 2:12)
4. In our church, do we have missionaries working among the Indians? Can you name any such missionaries and tell where they work?
5. What boy of long, long ago met a powerful enemy without fear even though he had no sword? (I Samuel 45:47). Did this boy have the same kind of faith as Missionary Hall had?

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**MEMORY VERSE:** *So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

*I Corinthians 13:13 (RSV)*



## Prayer and Praise

### *Pray for:*

Cleodo, the seminarian, who is working in Ariquemes.

Those who have accepted Christ since our return from annual conference: Nilson and Claudia, brother and sister.

Our first youth retreat in this area, to be held the first week in July.

The 30 young people who are attending the Saturday afternoon youth meetings here in Vilhena.

Our national leader and his wife, Sr. Vincente da Amabilia, in Colorado.

Da Lia and her sons as they read their Bible daily, but have few opportunities to attend services.

### *Praise for*

A good trip to Parana for annual conference and the good children's camp.

The renewed interest in the Gospel since our return here.

(Please make this change in the address of George and Helen Knapp: Caixa Postal 31, 78950 Vilhena, Rondonia, Brazil.)

## A little lady with a talent

She is little and old and bent. It is easier for her to see the ground than the sky. But she has a talent and she uses it.

She steps up on the platform and sits down on a slanted board with her back

against an outside wall of her house. Before her is a complicated machine called a loom. It, in itself, is a study, as is the woman of 85 years.

She works the harness deftly with her bunioned feet, lifting the warp. Her gnarled hand quickly pushes the shuttle through to the other side where her other hand catches it. She again works the harness with her feet and the rug she is weaving grows in length.

I mentioned that the machine in itself is interesting. It is all made by hand. No, she didn't make it, but, then again, she did. She had the know-how, a talent, and wanted to put it to use. Looms couldn't be purchased, so one must be made. She couldn't do it alone, so she sought a carpenter who had a talent also. He had the talent of being able to listen to instructions. From these he constructed, piece by painstaking piece, the working and moving parts of the loom.

The shuttles themselves are fascinating. They look like little boats. Each whittle of the knife that hand-carved them shows in the dark wood. They are polished to a golden glow now, after years of use. They almost know their way through the up strings and down strings that close over the little boat's tail after it has made another pass from one gnarled hand to the other.

The little bent lady made several parts of the loom herself.

She makes the threads for the warp. She grows cotton in her back yard and also buys some. She picks out the seeds

from the white balls of fluff, cards it and spins it, the same as my grandmother did with wool. After this, she dyes it.

The people in the community give her pieces of material, which she cuts in thin strips. She rolls up the colorful balls of cloth for her weaving. The threading of the loom is a tedious job. But even now at 85 and with a disjointed wrist from a fall, she goes on weaving. Up goes the warp, swish goes the shuttle, carrying the wool, and down goes the other set of threads in the warp, and her colorful rugs grow in length.

The little lady had a talent to begin with and nothing more. She sought to develop it to fruition. And *you*, have you put your talent to work?

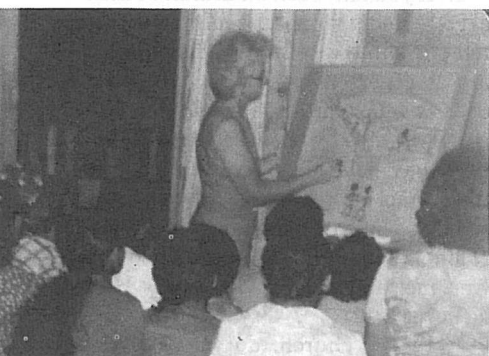
We each have talents and the Lord wants us to put them to use to bless others. Seek His will, as the Psalmist gives us God's promise in these words: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye (Psalm 32:8).

God here promises you that He will instruct you in your talent. He will teach you to use it for a blessing to others.

Let's put our talents to work. Let's give ourselves to God wholeheartedly and let Him work through us in our talents. Then our lives can be a blessing to ourselves and especially to others.

Proverbs 3:6: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

by Missionary Helen Knapp



Mrs. Knapp teaching Bible truths to a group of women and children in Vilhena.



And the length of the rug grows.



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# editorials

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## GOD'S WORD FOR TODAY

It is with gratification that we learn that Ole Hallesby's devotional book, *God's Word for Today*, has been reprinted by its American publisher, Augsburg Publishing House.

*God's Word for Today* has blessed so many hearts since it was first printed in the U.S. in 1937. And before that it had wide readership in Norway where Dr. Hallesby had a long career as a theological professor. As an aside, it could be mentioned that he experienced life in a Nazi concentration camp in the Second World War.

There are many devotional books on the market today. There are numerous devotional booklets distributed by congregations on a bi-monthly or quarterly basis. The latter have their good points and contain attractive illustrations. But Hallesby's book, or Ludvig Hope's *Thy Kingdom Come*, has a theological depth and solidity these others are hard put to match.

It is good to see a revival of interest in Hallesby. A few years ago he seemed relegated to the collector's shelf, but then his classic, *Prayer*, was reprinted. Now others of his books are being made available again, including *God's Word for Today*. All of this is very encouraging and Augsburg Publishing House is to be commended.

We encourage you to get a copy of *God's Word for Today*. Some of our readers will recall that in 1977 we printed one page of this book in each of our issues under the heading "The Best of Hallesby."

*God's Word for Today* is being published this time as a paperback.

## PRAYER REMINDER

One of our people, while calling about another matter, requested that our readers be reminded to pray for the brethren behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains. We are glad to advance this reminder to all our readers and the church.

No doubt there are many guilty consciences relative to this matter of prayer for brethren under Communist domination. We may have had every intention of interceding for them regularly, but then failed to live up to that resolve.

Pray for those who live in societies where freedom is very limited, where all sorts of roadblocks are thrown in the way of free expression of Christian faith. Pray for courage, for steadfastness for those brothers and sisters. Pray for the day when the shackles of government oppression and suppression will fall away.

Then thank the Lord also for some progress toward human rights, hence also religious, in Communist lands. In some places the air of oppression isn't quite as heavy as it once was. Governments seem a little more sensitive to world public opinion and dare not be quite as unrelenting in hindering religious expression. Is not this also an answer to prayer? At the same time we recognize that some believers do truly suffer for the Name of Jesus in these days, too.

We all watch events in China with interest. Much as we deplore the way relationships with Taiwan or Formosa were handled in the recognition of Red China, aren't we all more than a little eager to learn something about what has happened to that Christian work in China in which some of us were engaged prior to 1949? Did the Church survive? If so, what is its condition? Will the day come when we can give the brethren encouragement, even concrete forms of aid? The contact re-established between retired Missionary Len-ora Erickson and a Chinese convert recently, after 30 years, and which was mentioned in our previous issue, is certainly a hopeful sign.

Again, pray for the brethren in difficult circumstances throughout the world. God will be able to do mighty things when His people pray.

## PLAGENZ RATINGS

Receiving a lot of attention of late is George R. Plagenz, religion editor of the *Cleveland Press*. For some time he has been visiting Cleveland area churches of a Sunday morning and rating them in four categories: worship service, music, sermon and friendliness. A church can gain as many as three stars in each category for a maximum of 12 in a survey. By early March of this year 37 churches had been visited and four had received 12 stars. We don't know if our Word of Life Church (AFLC) has been among those visited thus far.

It might be valuable for us to think about those four categories in our local churches even though a George Plagenz is unlikely to drop in some Sunday to evaluate them. Think of your church, then, as we go down the list:

**Worship Service**—Do people approach the church and enter with the feeling that this is the house of God? Is the attitude one of reverence, before, during and after the service, at the same time as the spirit of joy and love is present? Is the service what it purports to be, "Lutheran," and what does being "Lutheran" mean? Do the people present enter into the service as though it means something to them or do some people appear to be observers? If ushers are used, do they serve in a way that adds dignity?

**Music**—Do the hymns or special music chosen for the service bear a relationship to the Sunday in the church year and/or the pericope texts of the day? Do the people enter in well to the congregational singing? Does special music seem to have worship and edification as its goal or does it come out oriented more toward entertainment?

*Sermon*—A one-time visitor mustn't pretend to be an expert on the preaching in a particular church, but those who attend regularly will have a good idea about it. Thus, the following questions: Are the sermons Word-centered? Does the pastor follow an organized pattern of text selection, preferably the pericope texts? Are the sermons interesting, with occasional illustrations which help to apply the message to life? Are they long enough, just right in length or do they tend to be too long to maintain interest? Are the listeners taught through the sermons, as well as motivated?

*Friendliness*—Can your church rightly advertise itself as "the friendly church?" Is the friendliness you look for when visiting in another church found in your own? How much attention to visitors is desirable; can any of it be counter-productive? Are there cliques in the church?

*Summary*—How does your church rank in a scale of one to 12? That would be difficult for any one person from within the church to say. Even a committee would have difficulty in saying. George Plagenz wouldn't be an infallible judge should he make a visit. But it's interesting to think about these things. And everyone present in a church on a given Sunday helps to make it what it is for that day. That's something to think about, isn't it?

### CLOSE TO HOME

Maybe you read or heard the news about the personal tragedy of the Van Vectors in the Philippines in March or maybe you didn't. If the people in a human drama are unknown to us we may pay little attention to it and there is no way that we can feel with them in the same way as if we know them personally.

Rev. Lloyd Van Vector is an American missionary, president of Dansalan Junior College in Marawi. Early in March he was taken hostage by Moslem rebels. Held for ransom, which was never paid, he was twice threatened with execution during his 20 days of captivity. While he was being held hostage his wife Maisie suffered a stroke and died. His joy upon release was soon tempered by sorrow when the couple's son Norman told him of his mother's death. Lloyd Van Vector "wept openly" when he heard of his loss.

I knew the Van Vectors. It came about in this way. A month or so after I arrived at my first parish in Medicine Lake, Montana, soon 26 years ago, a young Congregational pastor and his wife also arrived. They were Lloyd and Maisie Van Vector. We were the only Protestant clergy in town and we struck up a good friendship. They were heading toward mission work and only stayed for a year, but we kept in touch until several years ago. Once we chanced to meet when we were both back visiting in the community.

The Congregational Church preceded the Lutheran Free Church in Medicine Lake by many years and as a result had many people of Lutheran background in it, among them Enoch Land, son of an LFC pastor. Enoch has since passed away but a brother and sister belong to our church in Hatton, North Dakota.

Through Lloyd and Maisie's letters I was somewhat aware of their work in Marawi and Dansalan College and of the danger posed by the Moslem rebels. Nevertheless, hearing of this trial and sorrow in their family came as a shock. It meant more to me because I knew them. God give strength to Lloyd and Norman Van Vector.

—Raynard Huglen

### Perhaps I was Dreaming

## If Jesus had not come

The other day while I was looking ahead to the coming holidays, I said to myself, "Suppose Jesus had never come, what difference would it have made?"

I looked at my books. There is a whole shelf of devotional literature—Augustine's "Confessions," Arndt's "True Christianity," Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," the "Imitation of Christ," "Theologia Germanica," and many others. There, too, are various copies of the Bible, in various versions and languages. The New Testament is the crown and glory of it, and neither that nor the other books I have mentioned would ever have seen the light had not Jesus come.

Near by are various works on art. I

took down a delightful little volume on Gothic architecture and looked long at some of the great cathedrals—those wonderful embodiments of medieval reverence, devotion, and aspiration. "Frozen music," someone has called them, but they are more than that. They are a glorious testimony to a deep yearning for God and a profound conviction that the flesh is not all there is to life.

And then there is music. Think of all the great chorales, the Gregorian chants, the Te Deums, the sacred cantatas, and above all the mighty oratorios. All of which has sprung up because of Him. Again, there is the art of painting. Amid all the splendors of the modern canvas, nothing surpasses the por-

trayal of Christian scenes and sentiments.

And I thought of myself and my fellow men. What would we be without Him? "Lost and condemned creatures," is Luther's brusque reply. "Our nature is not harmonious to start with," says the famous Dean Inge, "and no harmony can be established by giving the reins to a mob of jarring impulses." But if we dare not give them the reins, to whom can we entrust them? "A little child shall lead them" was Isaiah's answer long ago, and there is "a great multitude which no man can number," all of whom can testify that "He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near to God through Him."

C. A. Wendell





by Mrs. Viola Rintala,  
Bessemer, Mich.

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21).

The dictionary defines a treasure as something cared for very deeply. It may be a child, a home, a church or a religious faith. On the other hand, it may be a card or comfortable house or just plain money.

The difference between the first kind of treasure and the second kind is that you are willing to make sacrifices for it, maybe even die for it. Not the second kind, as it cannot share love and affection with you.

A Christian mother, whose aim in life is to fulfill God's purpose, has the first kind of treasures, that for which she is willing to make great sacrifices and even die. From the day of her wedding and on through her life her first concern is to prepare a place for these treasures.

It all begins with her husband, her first treasure. Very soon she realizes that his purposes are somewhat different from hers. He is striving to be successful in whatever his work may be, so that he can provide the best for his family.

*"It all begins with her husband, her first treasure."*

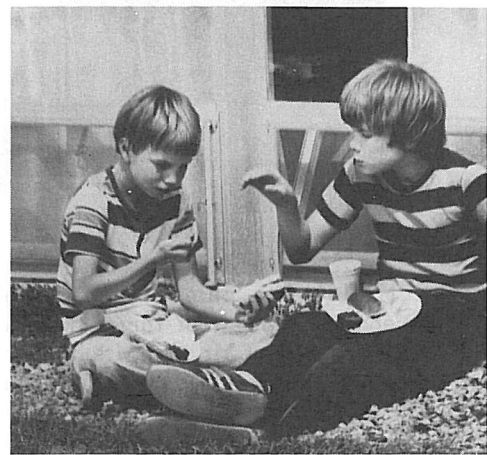
Mother on the other hand is concerned about making a good home for her

# A Mother's Treasure



husband. She wants to make it a place where love, along with trust and faith, is found. She realizes that in so doing she has a large part in making his life worthwhile and contributing to his success.

In time other treasures, children, are added to this home she is preparing. As soon as they are born they know that they, too, are treasures to be loved. Now she must learn that her love has to be shared with each new treasure as it comes along and never forgetting to include her first treasure, her husband.



Her own wants and intents are put in the background. She learns that training these treasures is a job that takes strength of purpose and a deep love, with a long look at the future.

Her interests begin to widen as her children grow and she becomes more involved in the affairs of the community. She continually strives for their welfare and is rich in the knowledge that she and her husband are doing the best they know how.

A mother knows that each of her treasures has different needs and learns to recognize them. She tries to give them a strong feeling of security. Then as they grow into men and women, this home background will influence them in their daily living.

You are thinking that I make it sound so easy to provide a home for and raise children. It never is! It takes a mother with endless faith, confidence and trust in the Lord to guide her treasures and to help them cope with the ways of the world.

Living with them has its ups and downs. But a mother knows she has treasures worth treasuring and prays that her small part of the world has been a better place for them to live in.

Who could fulfill God's purpose better than a mother?

Perhaps no single person has more influencing in the shaping and the molding of a life than does . . .

MOTHER



Hello! My name is Christie Dietsche, youngest of three children and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dietsche. I thank God for Christian parents and a Christian upbringing. I come from a very small town in northwestern Wisconsin called Sand Creek. My home church is Faith Lutheran, Running Valley near Colfax.

When God provides an opportunity for me to serve Him, namely, the Ambassadors, I believe I should take full advantage of it. I Cor. 15:58—"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord..." (NASB). I anticipate the opportunity to help represent our AFLC and AFLBS and would covet your prayers for our team and its ministry.

My first year at AFLBS has brought many blessings and I plan to attend again this fall.

My life has been one of many changes and new experiences. I can't really name one town as my specific "home town." These past 19 years have been exciting and very changeable. My home at the present is in McIntosh, Minn., where I live with my parents David and Sandra Molstre and three younger brothers. My father's ministry accounts for my very changeable and exciting life. My name is Renita and I am presently a junior at AFLBS.

My future plans include attending Dickinson (N. Dak.) State College this fall. I plan to major in elementary education.

I look forward to this summer when we will have the unique opportunity to share the good news of Jesus Christ in song with many AFLC congregations. I look forward to meeting and sharing with many of you this summer.

### COMING EVENTS

Home Concert, May 13, 7:30 p.m.  
Graduation, May 18, 8 p.m.  
Gospel and Home Mission Teams Training Week, May 29  
Luther League Convention, July 10-15  
Seminary Short Course, July 23-Aug. 3  
Fall Quarter Begins, Sept. 9

## Association Free Lutheran Bible School Senior Class '79

First row, left to right, Marsha Jacobson, Lois Lindquist, Sandra Myhre, Diana Hilmo, Mary Ann Dalager, Becky Oscarson and Kathy Johnson; second row, Nancy Moe, Jerry Blake, Karen Kjos, Cari Schroeder, Bob Rudebusch and Jack Randall; third row, Tami Bjorgaard, Joel Quanbeck, David Dahlgren, Cindy Lane, Julie Rudebusch and Arden Jacobson; and, fourth row, Lynn Kinneberg, Jim Johnson, Brigitta Nelson, Bonnie Dimick, Doug Estrem, Dennis Tieman and Steve Myhre. Not pictured: Cindy Alpert.



## Meet the '79 Ambassadors

**Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.**

II Corinthians 5:20

This is the theme verse of "The Ambassadors," the summer Gospel Team from AFLBS. Beginning in the last week of May, the team will be spending the summer traveling as representatives of Christ and of AFLBS.

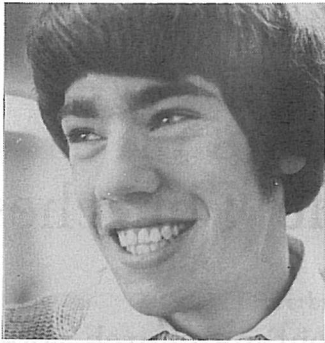
Following is a brief introduction by each '79 Ambassador.

## Are you

How many of you faithful Christians have ever stolen anything? Well, let's narrow it down. How about in the past year or even last month? Have you stolen anything just this week or even today?

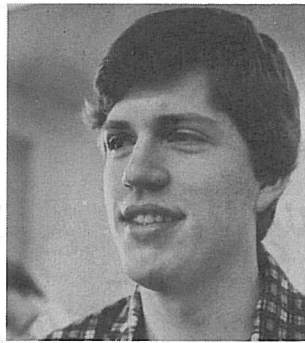
After asking yourself these questions, ask yourself this: Did I witness of Jesus to anyone today? Did I wake up this morning and thank God for another day to serve Him? Did I serve the





My name is Joel Nash, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Nash of rural Abercrombie, N. Dak. I was born and raised in this area and am a member of Bethany Lutheran Church. I am a 1978 graduate of Richland High School in Colfax, N. Dak., and am a first year student at AFLBS.

As a member of the 1979 summer Gospel Team I'm looking forward to the opportunity of serving the Lord by singing, sharing the Gospel, traveling and getting to know new people.



I'm Randy Moe from Thief River Falls, Minn. Along with my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Moe, I'm a member of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church.

Because Christ gave His life to save me from the punishment I deserve, it's my goal to be a servant of Christ and to tell others of His love and forgiveness. I'm thankful for this opportunity to share my faith with others.

This fall I plan to attend Northland Junior College in Thief River Falls, with the long range goal of full-time Christian work.



Hi! My name is Mary Haugen. I grew up on a grain farm near Binford, N. Dak., in a family of seven, so living in the "big city" while going to Bible School this year is really a change for me. My whole family has always attended church and Sunday school together at New Luther Valley Lutheran Church in McVile, N. Dak.

I had heard the choir, choral club, and Gospel Teams many times in church and at different Bible camps and retreats, so I was familiar with them before coming here to school. Earlier this year I had been thinking a lot about what I should do this summer. I had it narrowed down to about three different job opportunities. But in the back of my mind there was the hope of being on the summer Gospel Team, even though I didn't think that could even happen. So you can imagine how excited I was when I received the call to be one of the Ambassadors. Although I've heard it will be a challenging summer, I'm awaiting all that God has in store for me. I'm thankful for the promise of His strength which He'll give me if I'm willing to follow where He leads.

## stealing time?

Lord in any way today? If you didn't, you stole something more valuable than gold or silver; you stole God's precious time.

Although the Word of God tells us over and over to serve Him, we often neglect that privilege and wind up serving for our own needs. Serving God can come in many forms, from just praying to actually witnessing to others about

our Lord and Savior. You may be saying, "Well, I prayed and had devotions last night." But what about during the day? Don't you think that God deserves a little more of your wasted time? Serve Him whenever you have the chance, or should I say, wherever He gives the chance. Don't let God catch you "stealing time."

J. R. Cornish

## AFLBS team aids in league retreat

Ortley (S. Dak.) Luther League held a retreat on the weekend of Feb. 17 and 18. The "Rejoice" Gospel Team from Association Free Lutheran Bible School were guests.

The cold weather changed our plans of tobogganing, but after an afternoon of recreation at the Waubay High School gym we returned to a potluck supper at the church. The Gospel Team presented an evening program and later we had an "afterglow" service. Each person held a lighted candle and the song "Pass It On" and other choruses were sung. This was followed by sharing by alumni and present

Bible School students about how Bible School has affected and changed their lives. We then dispersed and went to our homes for the night.

A lot of new snow made many late for Sunday School the next morning. Two members of the Gospel Team shared their testimonies and then sang some choruses with two members who arrived soon after.

The church service brought the rest of the Team and they again presented songs. The service was followed by a potluck dinner.

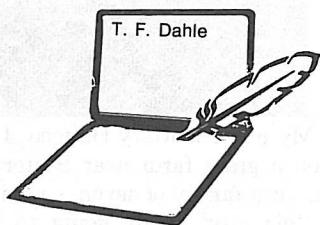
Fellowship is an essential part of our Christian lives and the weekend renewed each of us. "That which we have



The Rejoice Gospel Team from AFLBS. The little boy and girl are children of Pastor and Mrs. Moberg, Ortley.

seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (I John 1:3).

Linda Hamman  
Secretary



## Thoughts from Tryg

### FOR BLESSED MOTHERS

"A worthy (mother) woman who can find? For her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband trusteth in her, and he shall have no lack of gain. She doeth him good and not evil all the days of her life" Prov. 31:10-12.

A Christian mother is a blessing to her family, but an unsaved mother is a curse to her own offspring. What may be said of one good mother, may be said of all good mothers, everywhere and always. They are loving, self-sacrificing and patient. They have but one purpose, one prayer, that their children may be well and happy. They give their all and ask but little, and too often they get less. If your mother has been called Home, honor her memory with a noble life; if she is still with you, tell her of your love and express it in action.

Some years ago, a son in California wrote the following to his mother on Mother's Day. "Dear Mother: Today is a beautiful day. I wish you were here to share it with me. I am in my back yard looking at all my beautiful roses. I wish I could send them all to you. They are so beautiful. They remind me of you. Some are real large, signifying what you have given to me. Some are real small, signifying what you expect in return. Some are dark red, signifying your deep love for me. Some are pure white, signifying a pure Christian mother. Some are yellow and orange, signifying your pleasantness and happiness which you show to others, even when you do not feel up to par yourself. Some are pink, signifying the tenderness and understanding I have received from you. Then I looked at my palm tree which typifies your sturdiness of faith and character and the branches

spreading out indicating your prayers to God for me. Even all this does not come up to all the things you mean to me or have done for me. All in all, without a doubt, you are the greatest mother anyone could wish, and I love you very much, only wishing I could do so much more for you. May God bless you much more than I could ever ask. Lots of Love from your Son, \_\_\_\_\_."

Eve was the mother of the human race; Sarah the mother of Isaac; Rebekah the mother of Jacob; and Rachel the mother of Joseph, who became the ruler of all Egypt under Pharaoh. All were God-fearing mothers. Jochebed was the mother of Moses, who led the children of Israel out of Egypt and to the Promised land. Deborah was a prophetess and a judge in Israel, who saved Israel by defeating Sisera. Bathsheba was the mother of Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived and the greatest king over Israel. Elizabeth was the mother of John the Baptist, and Mary the mother of Jesus, the Savior of the world. The devil used a woman to bring sin into the world. God used a woman to bring the Savior into the world.

A saved mother can be a great blessing to her family, church, and community, leading many to Christ. An unsaved mother will have the opposite effect. O mothers in our AFLC, will you not turn to God, and ask Him to make you a blessing to your own family, church and community, and a blessing to the church at large. Let us all pray for the mothers of our church. God has promised, in Mark 11:24: "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Amen.

Trygve F. Dahle

## News of the Churches

### Montana church votes to call own pastor

Stillwater Lutheran Church, Kalispell, Mont., the original Association church in that community, has voted to call its own pastor. For a number of years it has shared a pastor with the newer Faith Lutheran Church in Kalispell. Stillwater is a rural church.

The congregation has begun the process of getting candidates for pastor, but it is doubtful that any call will go out before the AFLC Annual Conference in June, which is to be held at nearby Whitefish, and which Stillwater will help to host.

Rev. John Rieth is the pastor of the two congregations at present.

### Mission Emphasis Month held at Morgan Avenue

The 19th annual Mission Emphasis Month was observed at Morgan Avenue Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minn., during March.

Speakers for the emphasis included Mr. and Mrs. Michael Crow, missionary candidates to Indonesia; Miss Cora Martinson, retired missionary to China and Hong Kong; Rev. and Mrs. Loren Garborg, missionaries to the West Indies; and Rev. Harold Olson, retired missionary to Colombia.

The church, served by Pastor Chester R. Heikkinen, has an active missions program, and supports three missionaries, plus other mission ventures, such as schools, libraries and native missionaries.

Despite inclement weather, the attendance was good and an excellent spirit prevailed. For this we thank God.

The congregation is also installing a new organ for the sanctuary of Morgan Avenue Lutheran. It was hoped that it would be in place by Easter Sunday.

—Corr.



# CHURCH-WORLD NEWS

## LUTHERANS NUMBER 70.5 MILLION; THIRD LARGEST CHRISTIAN GROUP

Geneva—(LC)—Lutherans continue to be the third largest Christian group in the world.

Statistics compiled by the Lutheran World Federation Information Bureau show a 1978 total of nearly 70.5 million Lutherans, about the same as last year.

There are thought to be about 600 million Roman Catholics and about 200 million Eastern Orthodox worldwide, the two groupings with more adherents.

New regional totals, in millions (with 1977 figures in parentheses) are: Europe, 54.16 (54.30); USA and Canada, 8.93 (9.00); Africa, 2.88 (2.69); Asia, 2.76 (2.73); Latin America, 1.09 (1.03); Australia, 0.68 (0.73).

The Federal Republic of Germany accounts for about one third of all Lutherans—23.21 million in 1978 (23.41 in 1977).

Other countries with more than a million Lutherans (with 1977 totals in parentheses) are USA, 8.62 (8.69); Sweden, 8.00 (7.77); German Democratic Republic, 6.75 (7.00); Denmark, 4.75 (4.70); Finland, 4.65 (4.65); Norway, 3.87 (3.82); Indonesia, 1.67 (1.65).

students, and Milwaukee Lutheran High School (LMS), 1,003.

Latest figures for Lutheran grade schools are from the 1977-78 school year. They put elementary and pre-kindergarten institutions at 2,038, up ten. About two thirds of these are LCMS-related. Such schools are also supported by congregations of seven other North American Lutheran bodies.

Non-secondary pupil enrollment was reported at 218,521, up 4,038. Lutherans support the second-largest parochial school system in North America, after Roman Catholics.

## Church furnishings for sale

The following items of church furniture are available for purchase from United Lutheran Church, Greenbush, Minnesota:

- 26 10 ft. pews
- 1 6 ft. pew
- 1 Baptismal font
- 1 pulpit
- 1 altar base

The asking price is \$1,000 for all items or will sell individual pieces. If interested, please call (218) 782-2732 or 782-2451.

Donald Christian  
Secretary

## Personalities

New address of *Rev. A. L. Hokanson* is 811 South Water St., Apt. 28, Silverton, Ore. 97381.

*Rev. J. G. Erickson*, Minneapolis, Minn., was guest speaker at special evangelistic services at Hope Lutheran Church, Wyoming, Minn., Apr. 1-4. Local pastor is *Rev. Wendell Johnson*.

*Rev. Philip Featherstone*, Pukwana, S. Dak., our present writer of "Meditation Moments," was hospitalized in Mitchell, S. Dak., for some days in late March and early April with a blood clot in one lung.

## LUTHERAN PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS INCREASE NUMBER, ENROLLMENT

New York—(LC)—North American Lutheran high and grade schools are increasing in terms of numbers and enrollments, according to statistics compiled by the Research and Information Center of the Lutheran Council in the USA.

Center director Edward Rauff reports 84 Lutheran high schools currently, up eight. Six new ones are among the 55 Lutheran community high schools, supported mostly but not exclusively by congregations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The number supported by Congregations of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod increased by two to 15.

The remaining 14 schools and their affiliations are: WELS, 4; LCMS, 3; Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada, 3; and one each, American Lutheran Church, Church of the Lutheran Confession, Church of the Lutheran Brethren and Lutheran Church in America.

Pupil enrollment in the 84 schools is 21,919, an increase of about three per cent from the previous year.

The two largest high schools are both located in Milwaukee—Wisconsin Lutheran High School (WELS), 1,043

## SWEDEN CHURCH ASSEMBLY: NO CHURCH-STATE CHANGES

Stockholm—(LC)—The Constituted Assembly of the [Lutheran] Church of Sweden has voted 54-42 to recommend no change in the relationship between state and church in this overwhelmingly Lutheran land.

"I am disappointed. Now everything's up to the government," said Archbishop Olof Sundby of Uppsala. "I do not think that the decision taken... is good for the necessary renewal of the church," he added.

Also unhappy was Bertil Hansson, Swedish government minister for church affairs. Reportedly, he will call together representatives of the country's four larger parties to consider what happens next.

The assembly met for 35 days. Chaired by Sundby, its members included the 13 Swedish Lutheran bishops, 26 other clergy and 57 elected lay people. By itself it could not have acted to change the church-state relationship, but it does have the right to veto proposals approved by parliament.

Contemporary proposals to change the church-state relationship go back two decades. The latest plan, released a year ago, was endorsed by ten of the 13 bishops. In general, it would eliminate mandated civil functions—such as maintaining population records and



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## CHURCH-WORLD NEWS . . .

the burial system—now carried out by the church.

The plan has not yet gone to parliament, and may not in its current form given the Constituted Assembly action. The assembly set up a committee to study the current arrangements.

The other issue which dominated the gathering was the question of female priests, permissible in the Swedish church for two decades.

A 1958 "declaration of motive" related to the law allowing women's ordination functions as a "conscience clause," which allows those opposed to such ordinations to refrain from tacitly accepting their legitimacy by their words or actions.

Voting 59-37, the assembly endorsed a proposed policy which affirms that both male and female priests have equal rights in the church, that men opposed to women's ordination are not to be penalized for their convictions, and that in cases where a male priest refuses in conscience to work with a female priest, he, not she, would step aside from the position or situation in question.

About five per cent of priests in the Church of Sweden are women. Last summer it was reported that 138 of 150 male candidates for ordination did not wish to be ordained in a service in which a woman was also ordained.

**WELS WISCONSIN GRADE SCHOOLS EXEMPTED FROM UNEMPLOYMENT TAX:** A state appeal tribunal has reversed an earlier decision and exempted 115 WELS elemen-

tary schools in Wisconsin from a new requirement that they pay unemployment taxes for their employees. All the schools are run by congregations and are "fully integrated" in WELS church work, the decision said. The state says it will appeal. A tribunal decision on WELS high schools in the state, run by associations of congregations, is pending. The denomination says it is prepared to go to the U.S. Supreme Court if necessary, arguing on behalf of its "freedom of education . . . guaranteed under the First Amendment."

**LUTHERAN BROTHERS CHINA CLAIMS:** The Church of the Lutheran Brethren is to receive \$14,083 as settlement of claims in China dating from the Communist takeover in 1949, according to news service reports. A recent agreement between the U.S. and Chinese governments settled the claims for 41 cents on the dollar.

**FINNS' RELIGIOUS BELIEFS:** A government survey says about half of Finland's population believes in God as understood by the Christian Church; another fifth believe in God, but with some other understanding of God's attributes and activities. Six per cent call themselves atheists. About a quarter of the Finns say they pray daily. Virtually all of Finland's 4.7 million people belong, at least nominally, to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland.

**LUTHERANS AND ABS:** Of the U.S. Christian traditions, Lutherans provide the American Bible Society with its second largest chunk of support from denominationally identifica-

ble contributions. According to ABS figures for 1978, Lutherans from seven bodies contributed \$301,636.75—mostly from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (\$127,720.54), American Lutheran Church (\$96,545.38) and Lutheran Church in America (\$72,860.97). Baptists from 11 bodies gave more—about \$385,000. Total denominational support was \$1.45 million.

**NORWAY DEVOTIONS:** The Norway branch of the International Humanist and Ethical Union is attempting to reduce the number of Christian programs on Norway's only radio station. Currently, about 900 such programs air yearly, mostly twice-daily devotionals. The former Pentecostal preacher who heads the union says "faith and prayer belong to the private sphere of life and have no place in state-owned monopoly broadcasting." Norwegian broadcasters say they don't intend to change their policies.

**NEW LB BUILDING:** Lutheran Brotherhood, Minneapolis-based insurance and fraternal benefit society, has announced plans for a new \$30 million 17-story home office building and center, scheduled for completion in mid-1981.