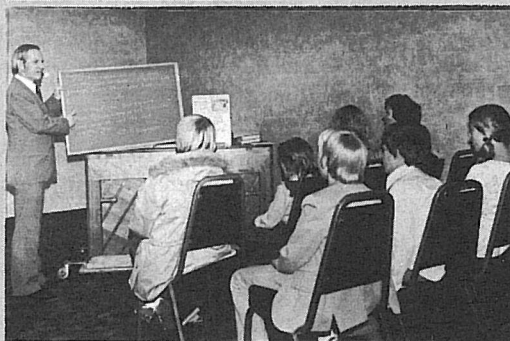


AFLC
HOME
MISSIONS



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

November 25, 1980



MOBILIZED FOR GROWTH

AT THE MASTER'S FEET

Pastor Ralph M. Rokke



Blessed are the meek

Have you ever watched a Christian be mistreated and falsely accused and yet return a gentle answer? I have.

Once I knew a Christian who was being criticized and attacked by other Christians. They were not as spiritually mature as he was. They had not served the Lord as long or as well as he had. He could have easily and justly silenced them. He could have done them real harm, but he didn't.

Rather he was loving and patient in responding to them and consequently he earned my deepest respect. He showed forth the Spirit of Jesus, who said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for *I am meek* and lowly. . ."

Galatians 5:23 tells us that *meekness* is part of the fruit of the Spirit. God wants His people to be meek, and there are four aspects to meekness.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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First, not bragging about how great we are is a part of meekness. Romans 12:3 tells us that no one should think of himself more highly than he ought to think.

Abraham Lincoln showed that he knew the value of this advice. When accused by an opponent of being two-faced, Lincoln replied, "I leave it to my audience. If I had two faces, would I be wearing this one?" Lincoln knew that he was not handsome and he good-naturedly accepted that fact about himself.

How should a Christian evaluate himself? Romans 12:3 says to do it on the same basis that God does, namely on the amount of faith present in the Christian's life.

Secondly, not trying to take the greatest positions and honors of life for ourselves is a part of meekness. Meekness means trying to serve others rather than seeking to be served ourselves. Jesus said, "Even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

Thirdly, meekness involves a willingness to hear and obey God's Word. Psalm 25:9 tells us, "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way." James 1:21 says, "... receive with meekness the engrafted word." There is a teachableness about being meek.

A Scottish preacher was once told by a friend, "You preached today as if you had come straight from the Presence." The preacher responded, "Perhaps I did." A meek spirit is one so filled with the word of Christ that the Lord Himself shines through it to others.

Finally, meekness involves faithfully doing whatever job God calls you to

do. If you think that a meek person is necessarily a weak one and one who doesn't accomplish much, then you are dead wrong.

Moses is described in the Bible as the meekest man in the world in his day. Yet God called Moses to the hardest job that any man in the Bible was ever given except for Jesus Himself.

When Moses was 80 years old, God said to him, "Go to Egypt. Take only Aaron your brother and the staff that is in your hand, and deliver three million people out of slavery to Pharaoh. Then lead those millions across a desert to the Promised Land."

Moses accomplished this seemingly impossible task. He did it because God was with him and working through him. Moses demonstrates the value of meekness: the emptier we are of ourselves, the more God can accomplish through us.

The Bible promises great blessings to the meek. It says, in Isaiah 29:19, "The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord . . .", and it says, in Matthew 5:5, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

Peter was a man who was proud and self-confident when the Lord first called him. Peter boasted to Jesus, "Though all men should be offended because of Thee, yet will I never. . ." That night Peter betrayed the Lord.

Peter needed to learn meekness, and he did. Peter ended up writing, in I Peter 3:4, that the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price.

May you and I also learn that lesson. May you and I also come to possess a spirit which is of great price in the sight of God. Amen.



by Dr. James C. Gerdeen, pastor of
Victory in Christ Lutheran Church,
St. Paul, Minn.

About 1980 years ago, a Savior was born in Bethlehem. Our planet earth was visited by the God of the universe. He was called Immanuel, God with us. For all these years, His followers have been celebrating Christmas, His birthday. His birth was so unique that it has fascinated man and has attracted his investigation year after year. Luke was one who searched for the meaning of Christmas (v. 14). He wanted his friend Theophilus to know the exact truth about Jesus. God wants us to know, too.

Luke calls forth three eyewitnesses: Zacharais, Elizabeth and Mary. We will focus our attention in this article on Zacharias. We usually think of him in reference to his own son, John the Baptist, but we find that mainly he was a witness of the birth of another son—the Son, the Son of God. Luke first of all establishes the credibility of his witness.

Zacharias: a witness and messenger of the advent

Luke 1:125, 57-80

The Credibility of the Witness (v. 5-8)

Elizabeth was Mary's cousin. Zacharias was the husband of Elizabeth and a priest of the division of Abijah. There were 24 classes of priests and Zacharias was in the eighth class. Each class was responsible for two weeks of duty in the temple per year. The classes took turns. However, all classes served during special weeks like the Feast of Tabernacles, etc. Elizabeth was also from a line of priests, being a daughter of Aaron.

Both Zacharias and Elizabeth were "righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly." This was a spiritual and priestly family. We do not have families of priests as such today, but I believe that God still prefers to call men to the ministry from priestly families.

This couple had no children and both were old. This was a calamity in a Jewish family. It was contrary to the blessing of Abraham. How much different today when abortion is popular and infants are found abandoned in city alleys even in winter weather.

After establishing his witness, Luke tells us that Zacharias witnessed a strange event in the temple one day.

A Strange Event in the Temple in Jerusalem (v. 8-23)

It was Zacharias' week of duty in the temple. Remember it was his turn only twice a year according to his appointed order. We find him "before

God" at the appointed time. Does God so find us? If we would be found before God at the appointed times, God would visit us, too.

Verse 9 says that on this occasion Zacharias was the one priest of his division chosen by lot to enter the temple and burn incense on the golden altar. The rest had more menial tasks. Usually only once in the life of a priest did he have this high privilege. Zacharias was old. This was his long hoped for opportunity!

What was the probability that Zacharias would be at the altar of incense at this time? It was one out of 24 that it would be his week. If his division numbered 100 as in Ezra 2:69, the probability then was one out of 2400 that the lot would be his on this particular day. It was God's appointed time.

There was *great danger* because not everyone was allowed to burn incense. For example, the Korahites had been punished by death by fire, and their families and houses swallowed up by an earthquake, when they had taken it upon themselves to burn incense (Num. 16). Also the sons of Aaron (Lev. 10) had been burnt up with fire when they offered the incense in an improper manner.

Thus the offering of incense was not only a solemn holy privilege, it was a dangerous event. When the priest entered the Holy Place, the people were obligated to leave the temple proper. They bowed and prayed outside in silence, praying that the incense offering would be accepted by God, that the priest would present the incense in a holy manner, and that the priest, in

It was God's appointed time.

As Zacharias went into the temple there was a crowd of people outside praying. First the priest would put burning coals on the altar. Second, he would put incense on the coals. Then he would bow in prayer. There was an intense *drama* to this event! The altar was overlaid with pure gold and it was set in the Holy Place just outside the Holy of Holies. The incense enveloped the place with a cloud of holy smoke.

this case Zacharias, would come out alive. They had a reverence for God! Where is our reverence today?

The *drama* of the situation! You think movies or TV shows are exciting? Not as exciting as the Bible!

So here was Zacharias. Thousands of times before priests had sprinkled the incense on the altar and nothing had happened. In Daniel's time, the angel Gabriel had appeared (9:21) to

Daniel at the time of the evening sacrifice. But now nothing significant had occurred for hundreds of years. For us, too, it has been many long years since Christmas I. And we patiently wait for Christmas II.

Yes, Zacharias was in suspense at the altar of God. But this time something happened (vs. 10-12). An angel appeared and Zacharias was afraid! Why? Was the offering of incense proper? Will the angel strike me dead? The angel (Gabriel) said, "Do not be afraid, for your prayer has been heard." What prayer? For a son. The prayer prayed years ago. Perhaps it was forgotten now in his old age. His prayer was answered at a time when Zacharias could in no way help answer it himself.

And the answer was glorious! Read Luke 1:13-17. However, we read (v. 18) that Zacharias could not believe. Meanwhile the people outside the temple (v. 21) were wondering why he delayed. Had he died? Would he come out alive? He came out dumb!

Zacharias had a problem believing. He said, "I am too old." "My wife is too old." Jeremiah, when called by God, said, "I am too young." Moses made the excuse, "I cannot speak." What is your excuse? Will you believe in God's miracle of Christmas today?

The Silent Man Writes

We pick up our account of eyewitness Zacharias in verse 57. Elizabeth had given birth to a son. The neighbors and relatives had gathered to celebrate. The son was to be circumcized on the eighth day. This was combined with the bestowing of a name. What would be his name? Would he be named after a relative, maybe be called Zacharias II? "No indeed," says Elizabeth; "he shall be called John." But there is no relative by that name. This cannot be. So they decided to ask Zacharias, but he could not talk. But somehow they communicated by signs to the father, and the *Silent Man* wrote, "His name is John." And they were astonished!

What's in a name? Let's see the progression:

Zacharias means Jehovah has remembered!

John means Jehovah has been gracious!!

Jesus means Jehovah is salvation!!!

"Once Zacharias obeyed the Lord . . . his tongue was loosed and he began to speak in praise to God."

The Silent Man Speaks

Once Zacharias obeyed the Lord in giving the name John, his tongue was loosed (v. 64) and he began to speak in praise to God. The first reaction to the spoken word of God was fear and the spoken word of God was spread through the whole countryside. Luke first gives the reaction to the word (vs. 65-66), before he gives the message (vs. 67-79).

What was the message that the Silent Man spoke that caused so much excitement? Zacharias preached a sermon. It is only two sentences long, but they are very long sentences. The first does not end until verse 75. The Silent Man had written "His name is John." Now the Silent Man speaks. What would he speak about? Naturally everyone expected him to speak about John, his son. When a baby is born, all fathers like to talk about their new baby. But the audience that day was in for a surprise. Zacharias did not speak about John. He first spoke about Jesus! That first sentence (vs. 67-75) is about Jesus!

This should be an example to us. Someone asks, "Tell me about your family." We should first say, "Let me first tell you about Jesus." Someone asks, "Tell me about your work." We should first say, "Let me first tell you about my Jesus who worked a work of grace for me."

The Silent Man had written, "His name is John"—Jehovah has been gracious. Now the Silent Man speaks,

**"He first
spoke
about
Jesus!"**

"Jehovah is gracious through Christ." He says, "Blessed be Jehovah God, because He has visited (past tense) us." Jesus was not to be born for six months, yet Zacharias said God has already visited us. The Holy Spirit has come upon Mary. The Son of God is already living in her. Jesus was the Son at conception, and Advent was not aborted.

The message goes on to say that redemption, too, has been accomplished (past tense). Redemption would not be finished until the crucifixion on Calvary. Yet, Zacharias says it is done. As far as God was concerned, salvation was already accomplished. God's promises are so certain, the future can be considered completed. In Rev. 13:8, Jesus is called "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." What God has promised is as good as done.

This is what the prophets have spoken of for centuries (v. 70). Zacharias believed in verbal inspiration of Scripture and in messianic prophecy. I like what a bishop Browning said: "The whole volume of Scripture did prophesy of Jesus. He is the sum and scope of their predictions. He is Abraham's promised seed, Abraham's Isaac, Jacob's Shiloh, Moses' Great Prophet, Isaiah's Immanuel, Ezekiel's Shepherd, Daniel's Holy One, Zachariah's Branch, Malachi's Angel, Abel's Sacrifice, Noah's Dove, Abraham's First Fruits, Aaron's Rod, the Israelite's Rock, the Patriarch's Manna, David's Tabernacle, and Solomon's Temple."

When the Silent Man spoke, he first spoke about Jesus, the one who visited us, so that we may be saved (v. 71). If God can make a dumb man talk, then He can make us listen.

Oh, by the way, there is another one that is usually considered silent at Christmas. He is that one in the manger. Why not *let Baby Jesus talk*. He is the Son of God, you know. I hope your Bible and your ears will be open this Christmas. God has much to say to you concerning His Son because He wants you to be saved. Receive Him as your Savior now. †

NEEDED: DEDICATION

by Pastor Herbert L. Franz
Cloquet, Minn.

The law of the kingdom is that of growth and progress. Whether it be in the soul of an individual man or in the Body of Believers, the Church, if we try to stifle its growth and its mission of getting out the Gospel of Christ, that church and that individual will begin to droop and wither and decay and finally lose what they have attained. For such individuals and churches are fighting an eternal law of God. . . "for whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it" (Mark 8:35). This is an eternal law of God. This law of God must always be kept in forefront in the work of

"The Law of the Kingdom is that of growth and progress."

Home Missions. It may mean death to self for many of us in order that the law of God's growth and progress may go forth.

I believe that our AFLC is a praying fellowship and we thank God for that. Prayer can and will move the heart of God. But earnest praying must lead to action. Our prayers must have hands, feet and heart added to them. Let us never substitute prayer for lack of obedience to move out and become expendable for God. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall find it."

There are people who pray but do not trust. Others pray but do not speak. Then there are still others who pray but do not give their tithes and offerings to God's work. Lastly, some pray but will not work, still others who will not lose their lives for Jesus' sake in order that the Gospel might go forth.

Jesus said: "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4).

Jesus said that daytime is fading and the night is closing in on us when no man can work. I believe there is a time in every church body's life when a season to reap precious souls for Christ is more favorable than at other times. I

We are sent people with a message of Christ's love for sinners. God works in us and through us to reach out to others. But we must be urgent; we must be wide awake; we must be doers of the Word.

"What we need . . . are dedicated men and women who are not afraid to die to self."

believe that we have such a favorable time in our AFLC right now. Remember our goal for the 1980s is 30 new congregations. I believe we can reach that goal. It is because of the seething unrest over the liberalism creeping into many churches that concerned people in these churches are looking to us for help.

Missionary Robert Moffat said this: "We shall have all eternity in which to celebrate our victories, but we have only one short hour before sunset in which to win them."

What we need, then, in our AFLC are dedicated men and women who are not afraid to die to self—who with a sense of mission and with a sense of urgency sense their responsibility to get the message of Christ out to those who have deep spiritual needs. Sure, it will cost us money, time, effort, but whom are we laboring for?

Jesus is our example in working. He came to do the Father's will; can we do less? If we say that we love the Lord and we in the AFLC pride ourselves in being pietistic, evangelical and even fundamental, then we must be willing to obey Christ, die for Christ, follow Christ and serve Christ.

Let us remember that the day of our life is our time for working. And we do the works of God when we cooperate in any way with Christ in advancing the kingdom of God or enhance, as we said before, growth and progress.

May the Lord arouse each of us to the needs of the Home Mission Board of our AFLC. We have been running behind in the giving to our Home Mission Fund. It is only as funds come in that we are able to take on new work. Certainly, we are dependent upon God for finances but God finances His program through willing workers and willing givers. May we see the day in the not too distant future where we can say to those people who ask us for help, "We are glad to help you because we have the men but also the means to establish a congregation in your area." May God help us.

(Pastor Franz has just retired from the Board of Home Missions after 12 years of service on it, all of them as chairman.)



4 Reasons why you must accept Christ NOW

BIBLICAL EVANGELISM:



by
Evangelist
Kenneth Pentti

"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, 'Verily I say unto you, I know you not' " (Matt. 25:10-12).

Delay has been the downfall of countless individuals and nations. An army delays its attack an hour and loses the battle. A patient delays an operation a year and loses his life. An aviator delays his point of descent fifty yards and loses his aircraft. A man delays his day of salvation one day and loses his soul. So the tragic story of man continues page after page, century after century.

Life at its fullest ends all too soon. One moment's delay may usher in an eternity of regret. Delay poses so serious a threat to mankind that Christ offers a parable on the danger of delay.

1 The Danger of Delay Is the Danger of Being Foolish (Matt. 25:3)

No one wants to make a fool of himself! It is quite humiliating to wake up to the fact that you have played the fool before God and everyone else.

Seldom does Christ use so harsh a word of condemnation and censorship as "fool" or "foolish," but one of the rare occasions for which Christ reserves the usage of this word is in relation to a person who knows very well what he ought to do but delays doing it until it is too late (Matt. 25:3 and 8).

To delay is to be foolish because of a failure to see your present need. These five foolish bridesmaids felt that they had sufficient oil to last for the rest of the night. Their's was a *present* need, but they failed to see it.

Often your present need is overshadowed by other interests. These virgins were so excited about the events of the evening that they failed to see their present need. What in your life is overshadowing your need of Jesus Christ as your Savior? Is it the pursuit of educa-

tion, success in business, pleasure or perhaps money or family or friends? No matter what it is, and no matter how noble it may be, if you allow it to overshadow your pressing and present need of Christ you are being foolish.

Your present need has eternal significance. The fact that these virgins did not have enough oil for the moment meant they would surely not have enough for the wedding party later. Jesus said, "He that believeth not (a present need) the Son shall not (a future consequence) see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Jn. 3:36b).

To delay is to be foolish because of a failure to exercise any forethought. The bridesmaids did not anticipate the possible events of the future. Their failure to calculate on the bridegroom's rrying resulted in their lamps running out of oil.

Forethought is a mark of both wisdom and maturity. Yet many who are wise in every area of life and who plan for all the eventualities of life, make no plans for and take no thought of tomorrow as far as their soul is concerned. They are like the man who fell out of a window of a 20-story building, who, as he fell past the tenth floor, waved at a friend and said, "Everything is all right—*so far!*"

2 The Danger of Delay Is the Danger of Being Wasteful Matt. 25:5)

To delay is to waste *time*. Instead of using what little time they had in which to buy oil and get ready the five foolish bridesmaids slept and thus wasted time.

I don't know how much time you have left—perhaps a day or even a

month or perhaps a year or so. But I do know that you cannot afford the risk involved in delay.

*The clock of life is wound but once
And no man has the power
To tell just when the hands will stop
At late or early hour.
To lose one's wealth is sad indeed,
To lose one's soul is such a loss
As no man can restore.
So—do not wait until tomorrow
To do His blessed will,
The clock of life may then be stopped
The hands may then be still.
—Author Unknown*

To delay is to waste *life* itself. Every moment that is lived without Christ is that much of life wasted. In fact, Jesus taught that a life is wasted even if a person gains the whole world and loses his own soul.

How old are you—15, 20, 30, 45, 65? Total your years and write across them, "Wasted." As far as God and eternity are concerned, your life up to this moment is wasted—"down the drain!"

The tragedy of this is that your life could be of great value to God. What a waste of life it would have been if Paul had been converted at 70 instead of 32. There was a Matthew Henry because he was converted at 11 and not at 70; a Jonathan Edwards because he was converted at eight and not 80; a Richard Baxter because he was converted at six and not 60.

THE DANGER OF DELAY

Life without Christ misses the real joys of living. If you call having guilty feelings the morning after the night before "living," you can have it! If living with anxiety, fear and on the edge of an eternity for which you are not prepared is what you call "living," you are welcome to my part of it. The truth is, you don't know what life and freedom, joy and peace really are until you come to live in Jesus Christ!

To delay is to waste influence. If only one of the five foolish bridesmaids would have become concerned about her need and had rushed to buy oil, undoubtedly the other four would have gone also. But the fact that not one of these virgins used her influence in this way made the others feel secure even though they were unprepared. Only God knows the number of people you would influence to come to Christ by your simply accepting Him today. But to delay is to make some other person feel comfortable who is unprepared for the bridegroom's coming.

3 The Danger of Delay Is the Danger of Being Unprepared (Matt. 25:8)

When the announcement was made that the bridegroom was coming and the festivities were soon to start the lamps of the five foolish bridesmaids went out, and because of delay they were unprepared.

Because of a misplaced trust in an uncertain future you may be caught unprepared. These girls were quite confident that they had plenty of oil *if* the bridegroom came at a certain hour, *if* the wedding party lasted only so long, and *if* they returned home by a certain time—if, if. But life is not made up of "ifs." The story of life is written in the hard, unpredictable language of reality. Hell has many people in it who intended to trust Christ tomorrow.

You may be saying, "If Christ keeps speaking to me, *if* I live to be 65 years or older, *if* I still have the desire to be

saved, *then* some day I'll become a Christian—if." Yours is a misplaced trust in an uncertain future. How do you know that the Spirit of God will call? You cannot come unless the Spirit of God calls you through the Word of God.

Because of a misplaced trust in the merits of others you may be caught unprepared. Could it have been that

"The Bible does not teach a second chance to anyone of any nationality at any time after the return of Christ."

these five foolish virgins were planning all along to draw from the oil reserve of the other five in case their lamps went out? (Matt. 25:8). But in their hour of need they discovered what one day you will discover. You cannot draw from the merits of others—be that person a Christian mother, a concerned pastor or a close friend.

Because of a misplaced trust in your merits, you may be caught unprepared. You may be saying, "I don't need to draw from the merits of others—I'm better than a lot of church members!" And may I say that if you aren't, you are in pretty bad shape! But your problem is a misplaced trust in your own merits. Jesus warned that many will make this fatal mistake. "Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?' And then will I profess unto them, 'I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity'" (Matt. 7:22, 23).

4 The Danger of Delay Is the Danger of Being Rejected (Matt. 25:10-12)

The ultimate danger of saying, "Not now, perhaps some other time," is the danger of being rejected.

To delay is to be rejected because of the terminative nature of Christ's coming. Christ clearly teaches that the bridegroom in this parable is an illustration of Himself in His Second Coming.

When Christ comes again He receives His own. "And they that *were ready* went in with him" (Matt. 25:10a)—not "they that intended to get ready" or even "they that were in the process of getting ready."

The physical return of Christ terminates all possibilities of being saved. Emphatically Christ states, "*and the door was shut!*" (Matt. 25:10b). The Bible does not teach a second chance to anyone of any nationality at any time after the return of Jesus Christ. You will read this passage in vain if you seek to find that the "door" was opened even one inch after the bridegroom came!

To delay is to be rejected because of a failure to know the Lord. Christ must be known other than by name (Matt. 25:11b); He must be known as personal Savior. "Not every one that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven!'" (Matt. 7:21).

To delay is to be rejected because of the imminence of Christ's return. Christ summarizes His sermon in a sentence when He says, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 25:13).

"Almost persuaded," harvest is past! "Almost persuaded," doom comes at last! "Almost" cannot avail, "Almost" is but to fail! Sad, sad, that bitter wail— "Almost," but lost!

—Philip P. Bliss

May Christ call you through His Word today, and may you repent and receive Him as your *only* Lord and Savior! †

As
Sunday
Schools
Look
Ahead



SUNDAY SCHOOL and the FAMILY

By Elizabeth J. Nelson,
Leeds, N. Dak.

Twenty years ago the Sunday School was shoved into a corner by some who said it was antiquated and ineffective. Others in recent years have pushed it out of their lives or renounced it as a teacher of absolutes while proclaiming there are no absolutes. Yet the Sunday School continues and has experienced an upsurge of interest and increased attendance in these last years.

The Sunday School has built-in survival because it believes that children can know Christ personally, can learn the Word of God and retain that which they have learned throughout their lives. As long as the Sunday School teaches that Jesus loves little children and that all children can come to trust in Him, children will begin to learn what God is like through knowing Jesus. They will learn what the family of God is like through their Sunday School family and sense a oneness centered in the absolutes of Scripture, truths and doctrines of which the Sunday School has never been ashamed. For these reasons, then, it will continue well beyond its two-hundredth year.

Convinced that it is being blessed of God, the Sunday School continues to mold minds and hearts for Christ rather than to engage in faddish modernistic teachings that enter and leave

the stage of life for short or long periods of time. Sunday School advocates seek to preserve the tenets of the Faith and the Christian values of our civilization for the family of the future and our country's future as well. They know that if faith in God is lost in this generation, only the intervention of God will preserve it for the next. In our time we have seen the foundation of the family undermined bit by bit through erring philosophy or political ideology. Christians are deeply concerned that young men and women have the opportunity to develop their own thinking free from mind-twisting role models directly opposed to Christianity. The Sunday School remains, then, not in the philosophical or political arena but where it belongs, as a teaching arm of the church.

The Sunday School has long known that the post-confirmation young person has high ideals and a sense of goodness, right and honor, often seeking a simple lifestyle with high moral ethics. These young men and women often seek a cause to support, yet they are not experienced enough in religious understanding to escape the lure of a Jim

Jones and his subsequent bondage. The Sunday School offers the challenge of the Word of God to commit our lives to the person of Jesus Christ, the highest call of any offered in our time. Not a commitment to bondage but to maturity and fullness in Christ.

Strange cults and twisted philosophy will be around us always and will no doubt increase in the years to come, but the Church and the Sunday School stand firm, determined and immovable. Yet neither the church nor the Sunday School can be of help to us and the members of our family unless it is used by each one of us.

As we attend Sunday School, we grow in self-awareness and as personal awakening comes to us our relationship to our Lord becomes clear. As the need for Christ increases in our lives we come to better understand the needs of others. Learning to understand each other better deepens our responsibility to the whole family of God. As we sit in our Sunday School class we may not be aware of the strong bond that exists between its members and the members of its extended family throughout the world, yet it is there nonetheless. We

[Continued on page 11]

"Yet neither the church nor the Sunday School can be of help to us and the members of our family unless it is used by each one of us."

editorials

A PRESIDENT PERHAPS

It is late to raise the point, but points cannot be raised until they come to mind, as this one did only recently. It pertains to new leadership in our Seminary and touches upon the Bible School as well.

The call has gone out to the churches and individuals to suggest nominees for the position of Dean of the Seminary, to be vacated by Pastor Amos Dyrud at the close of the present academic year.

The point is this: there is provision in AFLC documents for a president of the Seminary as well as a dean. We believe the intention is that the Bible School is also to be under such a president, if there were one. At the time the documents were approved there was only a theological seminary, or if the Bible School did exist, it was so new that no one thought to include it.

The document, "The Relationship Between the Free Lutheran Theological Seminary and the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations," speaks of "The Dean and/or the President, or both" (No. 8). Later, it is stated, "The President of the Seminary and/or Dean of the Seminary" (No. 9).

Article VII of the By-Laws of the AFLC Schools Corporation declares, "The schools of the corporation may each have a Dean or a President, or both." Provisions are stated in the Article for their selection and election.

Finally, there is in existence a Job Description for a president. Admittedly, the language of the Job Description doesn't make it clear whether or not each school should have its own president, but it is this writer's recollection from the time spent working with that document that the faculty understood it to refer to one president over both schools.

The Job Description makes it clear that such a president is under the supervision of the Board of Trustees and the annual conferences of the AFLC. The president is pictured as one who directs public relations and publicity, who represents the faculty, staff and student body before the Board, who is responsible for maintaining the spiritual, moral and doctrinal values as established by the Board and the church body and who is responsible for managing personnel.

The Job Description also spells out the duties of the dean of the Seminary and the Bible School, who thus become "academic deans" of their respective schools.

What would be the advantages of having one president serving both schools? One, such a man, freed from day-to-day attention to operating details, which would be handled by the academic deans, could spend more time in contact

with the congregations and other interested friends. He would have more time to travel. Two, securing a president would mean less disruption in the present teaching loads of our seminary teachers, if one of them should be named Dean under our present set-up. Men who are gifted in classroom teaching should be retained there as much as possible. No matter what is done, one more pastor will likely be called to the Schools. This arrangement would not require more than that. Three, one man leading both schools would hopefully be able to represent the interests of each equally well. In all considerations he would have the interests of each in mind.

What would be the disadvantages of having a president over both Seminary and Bible School? One, it might be difficult to build a smooth working relationship between the president and the deans. Two, in reference to the third point above, a president might tend to favor one school above the other.

Perhaps our readers can think of other advantages and disadvantages.

Perhaps it is untimely to raise the issue at all. And if the documents above did not include the possibility of a president it wouldn't have been raised. But since the idea is there, the provision exists, this is a logical time to bring the idea before the church, now when a dean for one of the schools is being sought.

G. N. ARNESON

I want to pay tribute to Mr. G. N. (Gus) Arneson, beloved to all his friends for his good humor and friendliness. He was one of those men, too, whom we needed in those early years of the Association. Not easily swayed, he lent stability to every situation in which he was involved.

Specifically, he was drawn into the area of the Schools and served five years on the Board of Trustees. Those were difficult years as the Schools were being established and there were some critical times. Gus Arneson was a good man to have along for his business sense, his level-headedness, his faith.

Although I didn't meet him that early, I remember seeing him sing with the Pontoppidan Church choir in Fargo before the merger. Later it was my privilege to be his co-worker. Almost always when we met, he would say, "You're doing a good job. The *Ambassador* is getting better all the time." While I didn't know if that was the case, I appreciated his interest.

One Sunday when I was preaching at his church, St. Paul's Lutheran, during a pastoral vacancy, Gus unintentionally took my hat from the rack and left the church before I did. He and Mabel, his wife, stopped at a cafe on their way home from church. When they left the cafe, not seeing his own hat there, he went home without one. Happily for me, it was still hanging there when we solved the mystery and I could retrieve it. We had a good laugh about it. You could do that with Gus.

We shall miss him, but then we're glad that we could know him.

—Raynard Huglen

Letters to the editor

The Mass

The *Augsburg Confession* compendium (October 14 issue) was a little disturbing, i.e., "The Mass we've not abolished, but hold it in the highest reverence." The difficulty being that the connotation of the Mass implies a sacrifice for sin, the Roman Church yet today regarding it as a repetition of the atoning sacrifice of Christ by the priesthood for the salvation of the living and the dead. Mass as sacrifice has no sanction in the New Testament. Luther regarded the Mass as the greatest abomination on the face of the earth - how then the suggestion that we hold it in highest reverence?

Justica est fides.

Pastor R. S. Persson
Bemidji, Minn.

(Ed. note: we doubt that reader Persson was the only one who took a second look at that line in Paul G. Madson's poem, "The Augsburg Confession." However, Mr. Madson's words are taken directly from the *Augsburg Confession*, Article XXIV, where, in our recently published book, *The Augsburg Confession: Its Meaning for Our Day*, it is stated thus: "Falsely are our churches accused of Abolishing the Mass; for the Mass is retained on our part, and celebrated with the highest reverence."

Luther and his followers didn't discontinue using the service with holy communion to which they were accustomed, even as they did not, at least at once, turn away from all practises in the Roman Church, although in time adherents of Luther have adopted changes in liturgy in varying degrees. But even today Norwegian Lutherans use the term "høimesse" or high mass at times.

The key lies in Madson's second line in the stanza in question: "It is *abuses* (emphasis is ours) of this sacred service that we challenge." Listed among abuses of the mass or service in Article XXIV are its celebration only for fees and its repetition as satisfaction for the ongoing sins of the church's adherents, whereas Jesus died "once

for all," Heb. 10:10, and we "are justified before God through faith in Christ," not by some outward act. So the Article really does meet reader Persson's objections and those of us all.

Readers are invited to study Article XXIV further and also the companion article in the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, in the *Book of Concord*, for added clarification.)

Profiles of Lutherans

Our hearts are grieved as we digest the short article on page 15 of the September 2 issue of the *Ambassador* magazine. This strikes us as a "re-run" of the method used by the ALC to worm its liberal ways into acceptance by the individual Lutheran churches 15 years ago. May we take the article point by point and, with God's help, try to enlighten others with its ramifications.

It stated that the purpose of the study, Profiles of Lutherans, is to obtain information useful to understanding Lutheran membership, help future planning and supply specific church body information. This purpose is to be achieved by acquiring demographics, family information, personal/family economics, attitudes, activities and criteria used for making personal choices. Do not the churches already have on their records the necessary statistics such as births, baptisms, marriages and deaths? Would not any information beyond this be infringing on the personal life of an individual or family unit? National computers already have too much data on each of us.

"All information collected will be strictly confidential." If the information is not available to anyone, why waste time collecting it? You can oppose centralization in national, state and local government, but how do you oppose it in your local church? What happens to local AFLC autonomy? Someone has to tabulate answers and use them; therefore, information cannot possibly be strictly confidential.

Referring to the President's Message printed in the June 24 issue, it states, "The survey consists of a set of

core questions which are common to all eight bodies, and also contain a series of questions which will be of particular interest to us in the AFLC." Assuming the eight bodies include the ALC and LCA which make up the largest bodies of Lutherans in America since the merger in the late fifties, we feel it is lumping liberal and fundamental churches together. Was not the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations formed in obedience to the clear command of our Lord, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (II Corinthians 6:17a). Why is it necessary to make a comparison of the AFLC with other Lutherans anyway? Many families attending churches that went with the merger found that they could no longer support and have fellowship in a unity that was departing from the faith once delivered unto the saints (Jude).

This letter is not directed against any Lutheran individual or church in our land, but against a theological pattern of increasing apostasy and a grave threat to Biblical Christianity.

If this letter is printed, we insist that it be published in its entirety.

Mr. and Mrs. Otto Hansen

Mr. and Mrs. Clare J. Munch

Culbertson, Mont.

(Ed. note: The American Lutheran Church was organized in 1961, the Lutheran Church in America in 1963, and the Lutheran Free Church joined the ALC that same year, Feb. 1, 1963. I am not sure to what readers Hansen and Munch refer in the second sentence of their letter.

As to the matter of Profiles of Lutherans, let me say two things. First, the Annual Conference last summer in Valley City passed a resolution endorsing this project and urged cooperation. So it has the blessing of the fellowship. Second, while I am not privy to the project, have not seen the questions, etc., we are members of the Lutheran family in the U. S., much as we may dislike some things in some of our sister bodies and I don't see anything wrong in gathering some statistics. And certainly "strictly confidential" material has to be seen by some-

SUNDAY SCHOOL . . .

are members of His Body. He is the supplier of all our need. He is the revelation of all our wondering.

He is the Alpha and Omega of our life. From Him all knowledge and truth permeates. Christian education is a continuing education. It always points to its center. All Sunday School curriculum must be judged and evaluated on the basis of its alignment with that center. The center is Christ and all curricula must be Christ-centered. Whatever weakness a Sunday School may be accused of having, let it not be that it

is off-center. Teaching methods can be improved upon, equipment can be updated, rooms and facilities can be modernized but the center from which the Sunday school radiates can not be changed, for it is Christ.

The Sunday School strives and is committed to a calling to bring a personal awareness of God and a meeting with Jesus Christ in the Scripture through the ever-present, always-working, Holy Spirit of God. He reveals Christ and leads the student to take his position in Christ. In short, the

“ . . . Christian education is continuing education.”

body. The idea is that the individual items of information aren't to be made public knowledge.)

G. N. Arneson

“Blessed in the eyes of the Lord is the death of His saints.”

I wish to say Amen to this in regards to our dear, dear friend, Gus Arneson of Fargo, who just left this earthly home for his reward in heaven. We'll miss him, that is so true, but our loss is heaven's gain.

It would take a long time to write about all Gus' virtues, and most of it I feel was done for the glory of the Lord. Of course, he, too, was human. One thing that always thrilled and challenged me was the way he talked about our Association. He called it “the church.” At first I thought he was talking about one individual church, but no, he meant all our Association. He loved the AFLC and I believe he had a great part in getting it started. He missed very few conferences and loved every one, and the Christian fellowship.

One thing, too, that always made me go home and try again after visiting with Gus was his good word for *everyone*. Whether they hurt him or not, he found something good to say about them. I pray I, too, by God's grace may do the same.

His funeral on Oct. 20 was a blessing to me. And Pastor (John) Strand's message confirmed what had been going on in my mind since Gus left us. That is, Gus never grew old. He wasn't ashamed of his age. Next month (Nov.

14) he would have been 90 years *young*. Mabel, his dear wife, told me that was one of the things that hurt her as she knew his departure was near. She said, “Gus is so looking forward to this birthday; I hope he lives to see it.” But God wanted him with Himself, so he'll celebrate the 90th home in heaven. What glory! But age didn't keep this man of God sitting in the rocking chair, as Pastor Strand so beautifully told us at his funeral. He was always planning on the future.

The song that has been in my heart fits Gus' vision. It goes like this: “Never grow old, no, never grow old; in a land where we'll never grow old.”

That's all I can remember of it, but what a future for all of us who have put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. I say, “Thanks, Gus.”

Mrs. Arnold Jodock
Hatton, N. Dak.



Mr. Arneson and Pastor Huglen at last summer's conference.

Sunday School, through the Spirit of God, nurtures the believer or seeks to win the lost. The Sunday School is there for each of us: to support the intent of the Christian home, to nurture the believer, and to introduce Christ to children, parents and the single adult.

The Christian family is constantly bombarded with anti-Christian values through different media of communication. Value judgments must be made each day by the adult, teenager or the grade school child. Each of us forms his decisions from personal experience or known fact. The Sunday School presents facts based on Scripture that relate to life's ever-increasing problems at every age level; because the Sunday school is convinced that value judgments that rest on the Christian faith are the only firm base from which any of us can act or live a life.

Perhaps the 1980s will be known for the economic pressure that touches all of us. For some it has meant that both parents must enter the work force. Parents of young children fear that will become a threat to the personal parental training they want to give their family. Now it is certain that the Sunday School can never function as a substitute parent for the religious instruction of children but it does offer through its curriculum the teachings of Jesus and the Christian values that will instill in a tender conscience the principles that Christian parents want for their children.

We can never know or learn all there is to know or learn about the Scriptures and how they relate to our life, therefore Christian education is continuing education. We are thankful that God has ordained that the Sunday School shall be the arm of His church for the continuing Christian education of us all. †

WMF District Fall Rallies

Eastern North Dakota - Buxton

Ny Stavanger Lutheran Church hosted 131 ladies for the fall rally day. Topics for the day centered on the theme "Only One Life."

Mrs. John Simpson, Valley City, led the Bible study with a chalk talk and Mrs. George Knapp, Brazil, shared about the mission work in Rondonia.

Mrs. Albin Haugen and Mrs. Curt Emerson led the devotional times. Music during the day was provided by Mrs. Rodney Stueland, Buxton, Mrs. Gerald Knudsvig, Buxton, Mrs. Vincent Larson, Buffalo, and Mrs. Curtis Emerson, Valley City, and various trios. Mrs. Paul Bjornson was re-elected president and Mrs. Alver Christopherson was elected treasurer.

The district ladies gave Helen Knapp a personal shower during the afternoon coffee time.

Mrs. Vernon Russum
Secretary

Northern Michigan - Bessemer

"Our God Reigns" was the theme for 39 ladies at the rally day at Our Savior's Lutheran Church. Vila Rintala welcomed the guests. Gerine Jayka, district president, and Sue Spaete, Bessemer, were the devotional leaders.

Mrs. Gary Skramstad, local pastor's wife, led the morning Bible study and Mrs. Alice Kinnunen, Minneapolis, Minn., the afternoon session, with a "pillow talk."

Mrs. Richard Schauland
Secretary

Minneapolis District - Radcliffe, Ia.

Mrs. Glenn Lenning of Salem Lutheran Church welcomed the district WMFs to Radcliffe. Mrs. Karl Berg, Wanamingo, Minn., and Pastor Donald Greven, local pastor, centered the Bible study and afternoon message on "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."

Mrs. Brad Nelson, Amery, Wis., Mrs. Ruth Hodnefield, Radcliffe, and

Mrs. Jay Erickson, Minneapolis, shared in devotions and a greeting. Mrs. Marlin Benrud, district president, Mrs. Arlie Swenson, Mrs. Donna Lorenzen, Mrs. Marie Grubb, Mrs. Maris Hoverstein, and a trio from the Radcliffe parish provided the day's music.

Minneapolis District women were encouraged to accept the challenge of providing window coverings for the dormitories at the ARC. Additional information may be obtained from Mrs. Robert Dietsche, ARC, Route 1, Box 92, Osceola, WI 54020.

Mrs. Clifford Nelson
Secretary

West Coast - Ferndale, Wash.

Mrs. Percy Hanowell of Triumph Lutheran Church, Ferndale, and district president Mrs. Alvin Grothe welcomed the 86 registrants to the fall rally. The theme, "O to be like Thee," was taken from Phil. 2:5. Mrs. Ronald Knutson, Ferndale, and Mrs. Allen Herset, Kalispell, Mont., led the morning devotions and prayer time.

Mrs. Leslie Galland and Mrs. Petra Lee, Everett, Wash., and Mrs. Herset and Mrs. Arden Hilmo, Lake Stevens, Wash., provided music. Pastor Ingolf Kronstad, Kirkland, Wash., spoke in the afternoon.

Due to the large distances within the district, it was decided to have only a spring rally in the future. An afternoon tea during Bible camp week will replace the fall rally.

Solveig Hays
Secretary

North Central Minnesota - Winger

Pastor and Mrs. Harvey Carlson, Grand Forks, N. Dak., spoke for the rally day at Dovre Lutheran Church. Topics of the day centered on "Love is the River of Life."

Mrs. Marvel Thompson, Shevlin, presided. Ladies from Fosston and Mt. Carmel, McIntosh, sang several selections throughout the day.

Mrs. Maybelle Holt
Secretary

NW Minnesota - Greenbush

Oiland Lutheran Church hosted the women for their rally, centered on the theme "Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Mrs. Martin Johnson presided throughout the day following the welcome by Mrs. Edna Wahl.

Mrs. Donna Anderson and Mrs. Ida Akerlund led the devotional times. Mrs. Daryl Haugen, Mrs. Jerome Boen, Oiland ladies, Mrs. Harvey Melby and Mrs. Barbara Erickson provided special music. Seven ladies shared for the morning Bible study time. Pastor John Strand, Fargo, N. Dak., spoke at the afternoon service.

The late Mrs. Inga Johnson, Thief River Falls, was given special tribute.

Mrs. Paul Flaten,
Secretary

Lake Superior District - Mason, Wis.

Faith Lutheran Church hosted the rally, focusing on the theme "Growth." Mrs. Martha Hanson welcomed the women. Kerry Hill led in devotions, followed by a Bible study by Mary Kay Peterson. Host pastor Richard Bartholomew brought the afternoon message.

Miss Christine Hanson, Cloquet, Minn., and Dorothy Kern, Duluth, Minn., assisted with the music. Mrs. Bonnie Roberts of Mason was elected vice-president and Aili Siltanen, Cloquet, was re-elected secretary.

Aili Siltanen
Secretary

Cradle Roll graduates

Grafton, N. Dak.

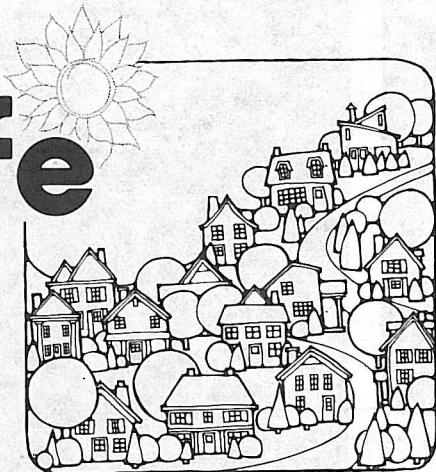
Recent graduates of the Bethel Lutheran Cradle Roll were: Brooke Aasness, Tami Dannelly, Brian Moe, Mark Presteng, Brent Rud, Andrea Seible, and Randy Vogslund.

McVile, N. Dak.

Janell Quanbeck and Michelle Johnson were honored as graduates of the New Luther Valley Cradle Roll.

Send all WOMEN'S PAGE news to Miss Solveig Larson, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Mpls., Minn. 55441.

Life on the Edge of Town



New Assignment

On Oct. 12 I began serving a second church, Bethlehem Lutheran, Greenbush, Minn. That, together with Telemarken Lutheran, Goodridge, keeps me busy on Sundays if for no other reason than that they're 56 miles apart.

The Telemarken service is at 9:30. That gives me time to make any hospital calls in Thief River Falls afterward and get a bit of lunch before getting to Bethlehem by 12:45 for confirmation class and then we have our worship service at 2. Bethlehem has a family night once a month and then there is no service that day.

So I find with my Sunday driving now, 112 miles, I am driving more than at any time in my ministry, on a regular basis, that is. There was one exception, the eight months when I conducted services in Fargo, one way being 135 miles, but usually I stayed over one night.

But I don't mind serving country churches (I have a loose relationship with these two. They can dismiss me with a notice of a week or two.) and doing the driving involved. It is interesting to see the various congregations in their places of worship.

I think back on all the congregations I've served for longer or shorter periods since ordination: Medicine Lake, Bethel, Rock Spring, Zion, Bethany, Scandia, Ferkingstad, Nidaros, Ny Stavanger, Zoar, Valley, Tabor,

Saron, Hope, Buffalo Lake, St. Paul's, Telemarken, Bethlehem. To that list could be added Medicine Lake in Minneapolis, the first duplication in names, because with other pastors I took my turn in Sunday preaching and also taught the confirmation classes when there was no regular pastor for some over two years. Other pastors took other responsibilities in addition to the preaching.

Some of my congregations are no more and yet every day, almost without fail, I name these churches in prayer for the Lord knows all of those whom I would include with each name.

The Fall Days

It is late fall now. The air is cool, often there is wind. The trees are bare, even the lilac finally releasing its last foliage.

If not before, the final work outdoors must be done, whatever hasn't been finished—making the house weather-tight, clearing the garden, setting the snow fences, adding to the wood or coal supply, if one uses those fuels.

There is something to be said for a November day, too. It is a good time for certain types of work. One doesn't notice the cold when muscles are being used vigorously. Or if one is well-clad the nip in the air can be tossed aside as one walks through the woodland or

along a river.

Winter is coming. It could come any day now. But that's to be expected where we live. While we hope it won't be unkind to us, we know that winter will have its compensations, too.

Advent Nears

Advent is soon here. It will have come when most of you read this. There is an excitement, an anticipation in Advent. Christmas is around the corner. It is a season of preparation.

I'm glad I'm in a liturgical church, that we observe the seasons of the church year. As a pastor it is exciting to deal with Sunday texts which look back toward the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem and forward to the Second Coming.

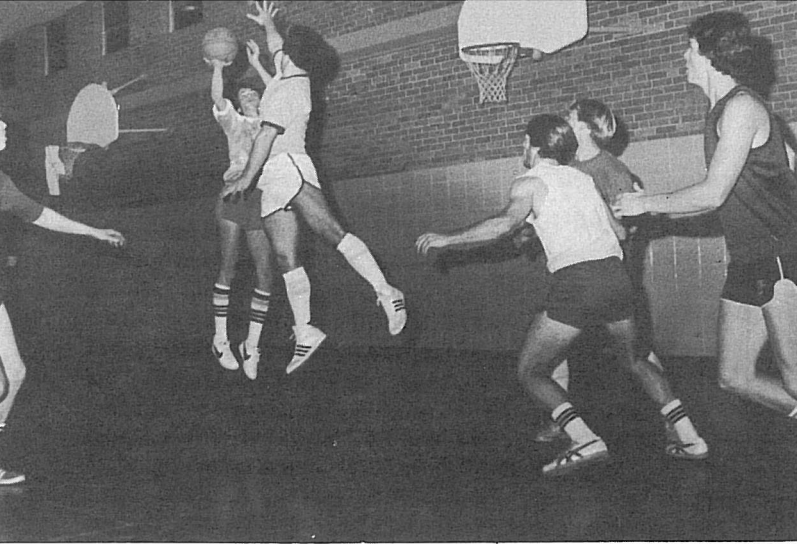
Advent is the time for children's Christmas programs, although it's fine if some are held after Christmas, too. This year I look forward to attending a children's program in a church I serve, Bethlehem. Haven't had that experience for nine years and I've missed it.

"O How Shall I Receive Thee, How Greet Thee, Lord, Aright?", "O Come, O Come, Immanuel," "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus," "Make Wide the Door, Unbar the Gate, the King of Glory Comes in State," and "Rejoice, All Ye Believers," all great Advent hymns. The pace quickens in church and home as these songs resound in our churches and linger in our minds as we go about daily tasks.

Devotion

Mrs. Andrew (Tilda) Bakken, whom I visited in Plentywood, Mont., last July shortly before her 98th birthday, passed away on Oct. 4. The devotion and loyalty of her daughters, Ragnhild and Marie, in caring for her at home to the last, through a good many years of semi-invalidism and as an invalid is something I don't expect to see duplicated often in life.

—Raynard Huglen



Brad Sorenson, Lake Stevens, Wash., defended against Darryl Haugen, McVile, N. Dak., during a recent practice. AFLBS begins its YMCA schedule in December.



Kelli Peterson, Kenyon, Minn., explained rotation during the first volleyball practice.



Miss Barb Elmquist led the Cloquet Youth Choir for a Sunday morning service at Medicine Lake. The youth from St. Paul's had led the Saturday night Youth Rally on campus. Barb is an '80 graduate of AFLBS.

CAMPUS NEWS

A student shares

Hebrews 10:9: "Let us hold fast the confession of our faith without wavering." This is one of the main concerns that I had when I came to Bible School. I really wanted to become more firm in my faith without any weakness. Through the many blessings received from God's Word I've found that I can have this attitude, but not in my own strength. During my earlier walk as a Christian, that was what I was doing. But God through His Word has simply taught me, "I am your strength, trust in Me."

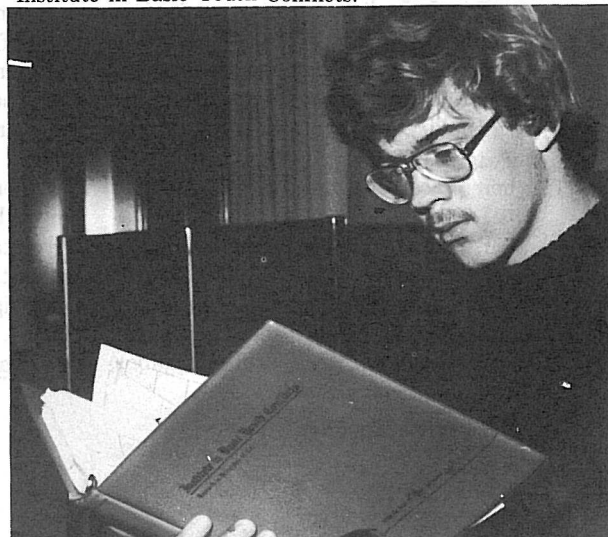
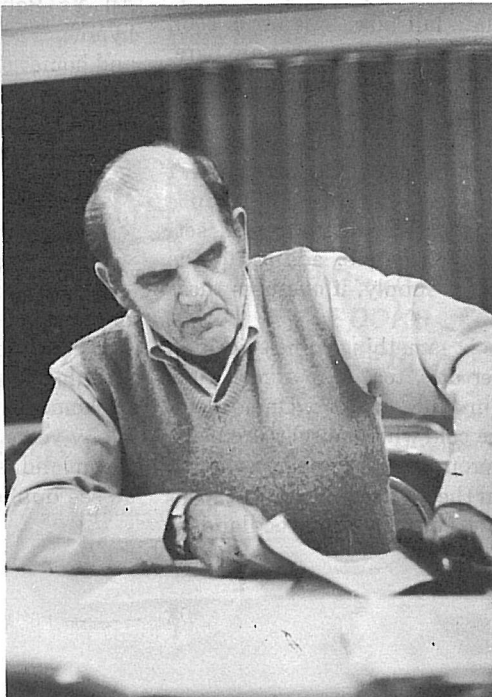
God has really opened my eyes to his love and through this I can love my family and people around me. Most of all I appreciate my life as I dedicate it to His purpose.

Brad Sorenson
Lake Stevens, Wash.

Mark Olson, Bloomington, Minn., reviewed his notes. The week of November 3-7 found students at the Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts.

AFLTS semminettes have been busy gathering recipes for their new cookbook. Mrs. Jon Wellumson has been coordinating the fund-raising project of selling 500 books.

Mrs. Peter Franz and Mr. Harry Bodsberg compiled cookbooks.





A Minister's Musings

Pastor Einar Unseth



All His benefits

Psalm 116:12

"My paper isn't big enough." This comment came from the 6-year-old brother of one of our daughters-in-law. The teacher of this boy had passed out a sheet of paper to each of the students in her class and had instructed them to draw their father and mother and brothers and sisters. All of the children commenced the drawing of the members of their family. However, this one boy merely gazed at his paper with a bewildered look on his little face. His delay caused his teacher to inquire of him why he wasn't commencing his assignment. Innocently he replied, "My paper isn't big enough." He had come to this logical conclusion because there are ten members in his family. Hearing that amusing happening led me to think to myself, "Neither is my paper big enough to record on it all of God's blessings to me."

I am reminded of a little girl who was counting her blessings on her fingers. "This first finger", she said, "God made me. The next one, He gave me my parents. The next, I have brothers and sisters." Then her sister suggested, "Don't forget your new shoes." "Well, that will have to go on the other fingers", replies the little girl, "but what bothers me is that I am not going to have fingers enough."

Yes, when we begin to seriously consider God's blessings to us, we dis-

cover how numerous they are. The psalmist had considered in his heart God's benefits to him. This consideration led him to exclaim, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" He seemed to be overwhelmed as he contemplated God's goodnesses to him. Not only did he see the many blessings in his life, but he saw the Divine mark upon each one of them.

One of the benefits that he was thinking of was God's helping him when he was brought low. In verse 6 of this 116th Psalm, he states, "I was brought low and He helped me." Even trials can be a benefit to us. A wealthy man lost all that he had. Yet, even in misfortune, he was happy. When asked why he could be happy in all circumstances of life, he answered, "When I was rich, I saw God in all things. Now that I am poor, I have all things in God." Yes, the Christian can see God's benefits even in affliction, but David experienced also God's benefit when He helped him out of his troubles. God stretched forth His gracious hand and delivered him.

Thanksgiving time should move us to count God's blessings—all of His material blessings, but especially His blessing of salvation in Christ. Truly our paper is not big enough to record them. May the magnitude of God's benefits to us lead us to ask, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" †

Former member of Board of Trustees dies in Fargo

Mr. G. N. Arneson, one time member of the Board of Trustees of the Association Schools, passed away on Oct. 16, in Fargo, N. Dak. He was 89.

Funeral services for Mr. Arneson were held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Fargo, on Oct. 20, with Rev. John P. Strand officiating. Mrs. Ida Solberg was the organist, Mrs. Marvin Arneson the soloist. Pallbearers were Lawrence Dahlgren, Russell Duncan, Nels Flom, Arnold Jodock, Nels Kallestad and Gordon Melbye. Interment was in Sunset Memorial Gardens, Fargo.

Gustav N. Arneson was born on Nov. 14, 1890, at Farmington, Minn., to Arnold and Susanna Arneson. At the age of 16 he obtained employment as a clerk in the general store in Farmington while preparing himself for a business career. In 1917 he joined the United States Air Corps and served in England and France. After his discharge from military service, he travelled as a salesman for a shoe firm and in 1923 he purchased a shoe store in Madison, S. Dak. In 1950 Mr. Arneson sold the store and moved to Fargo where he became associated with the Fargo Investment Company as a salesman and later was elected to the board of directors, serving that company for 22 years, retiring at the age of 82 years.

On July 22, 1915, he married Mabel Nystuen at Northwood, Ia. She survives him, together with one son, Nor-el, Moorhead, Minn.; two daughters, Suzanne, Mrs. Norman Edwards, Dent, Minn., and Audrey, Mrs. John Gillam, Hickson, N. Dak.; one brother, Earl, So. St. Paul, Minn.; six half brothers and sisters; and 11 grandchildren and three great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by four brothers and a sister.

An early and dedicated supporter of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, Mr. Arneson served on the Board of Trustees from 1965-70.

Blessed be his memory. †

(See the editorial "G. N. Arneson" on page 9.)

In Memoriam

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

MINNESOTA

Spicer

Mercedes Arneson, 64, Aug. 4, Green Lake

Gregory Jones, 24, Sept. 5, Green Lake

Douglas Hamilton, 3 weeks, Sept. 5, Green Lake

Lloyd Dresser, Sr., 74, Oct. 10, Green Lake

SOUTH DAKOTA

Reva

Bob Elling, 59, Sept. 27, Slim Buttes

Personalities

Dr. James C. Gerdeen, pastor of Victory in Christ Lutheran Church and writer of the article, "Zacharias: A Witness and Messenger of the Advent," in this issue, lives with his family at 1852 Flandrau St., St. Paul, Minn. 55109.

Rev. Eugene Enderlein, Thief River Falls, Minn., and executive director of World Missions in the AFLC, conducted a mission conference at Bethania Lutheran Church, rural Newfolden, Minn., Nov. 2-5. Rev. Merle Knutson is the local pastor.

Rev. T. K. Skramstad, Minne-
waukan, N. Dak., spoke at special
seetings in Zoar Lutheran Church,
Hampden, N. Dak., Nov. 16-19. The
congregation is served by Rev. Ragene
Hodnefield.

Something to think about

One morning about 2 o'clock I awoke and could not go back to sleep. I started thinking about Christmas as I had to prepare for a program at church. Suddenly a thought crossed my mind: Santa Claus, who is he? It always comes out in the headlines in the local paper: "Santa is coming to town Saturday. He will be in the parking lot at the supermarket at 10 o'clock." All the children rush to see him and listen to promises he cannot keep.

What if the headlines had read: "Jesus is coming to town!" Would we put all this effort into getting ready for Him or would we say the kids wouldn't enjoy that and keep them at home? Jesus doesn't hand out little sacks of candy, but gives the gift of eternal life. He puts His hand on their heads and blesses them, and says, "Let the little children come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Helen Swenson
Boscobel, Wis.

With our Evangelist

Zumbrota, Minn.

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
Dec. 7-11
Pastoral vacancy

Osceola, Wis.

Luther League Federation Leadership
Retreat at the ARC
Dec. 27-28
Rev. Dale Mellgren, president

Remember our Evangelist-Youth Worker as he meets these year-end appointments. Pray for him, too, as he looks toward the coming year in evangelism for Christ.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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IN OUR CHRISTMAS ISSUE

Trygve Dahle shares boyhood remembrances of Georg Sverdrup . . . Christmas in Brazil and Kenya, Africa . . . a greeting from our church president . . . a true story for Christmas by Mrs. Elizabeth Nelson . . . devotional messages by a pastor of the church and a school teacher. . . poetry . . . beautiful pictures . . . other regular features . . . coming next time, Dec. 9.

Leaders need instruction and encouragement too!

Attend the Leadership Retreat

December 28-29

at the ARC
Osceola, Wis.

sponsored by
AFLC Luther
League Federation

Second Coming

Here (Luke 21:34-36) we learn that, while there will be signs of the Parousia—that is, the Second Coming—they will not be so unmistakable as to preclude the need of constant readiness. After all, the hour will strike when we are not expecting it. Jesus Himself said that no man, nor the angels of heaven, nor even the Son of man Himself during His voluntary humiliation, knew just when the end would come. It is best so. Otherwise we might grow negligent.

L. S. Keyser