

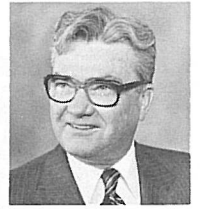
**THE
LUTHERAN
AMBASSADOR**

October 12, 1982

The Just
Shall Live
by Faith.

Romans 1:17

AT THE MASTER'S FEET



Rev. John Strand

Dear Master, how great Thou art! Thine is a glorious kingdom. It is a kingdom of Grace. It is a kingdom of eternal glory. You look after Your own. Their's is a wonderful future. How good Thou art!

Lord, Your enemy and our enemy is very busy. His is a ministry of destruction and hatred. He is very clever. He masks his works to look like Yours. Thus he fools people. He is very successful. Lord, help and defend us. Without Your help we are all lost.

Thank You, Lord, for Your Word. It teaches us and warns us concerning the enemy, Satan. He has sown tares that look like a part of Your kingdom. These look so good, but the fruit is bad and they destroy the good grain (Matthew 13:25). Lord, give me the spirit of discernment so that I can tell the good from the bad, the false

prophets from the true. There are so many claiming to be Yours today who are not, according to Your Word. Many people are being led astray. Lord, defend the true Church from the false.

Lord, in the sermon on the mount (Matthew 7:15-23), You gave some warning as to how to detect what is false. They often look and speak like Your children. They inwardly are wolves, however, and prey on the flock for their own profit and enjoyment. They are more concerned about themselves than about the sheep. They often grow rich and full at the expense of the flock. They are constantly asking and demanding more for themselves. They appear successful and godly.

Lord, it frightens me that things that appear so good can be so deadly. I enjoy a person who is eloquent and good at communicating. This is a great gift. But the enemy has many who are eloquent and speak very piously. Yes, they may use Your Name constantly, but be false. This is Your Word (Matthew 7:21-23). Help me not to support or defend such.

Master, it is wonderful when souls are saved. But You said that not all that appears such is true. There are those who cast out demons, but are of the devil themselves. This is frightening. Some clever people can and do look very evangelistic but be false. Lord, have mercy!

Lord, You know how we creatures like to see the unusual, the miraculous. Not all that appears miraculous is of You. Pharaoh's priests could do much that You did through Moses. Help me not to be looking for the unusual and glamorous.

The fruit determines who are Yours, and who are false (Matthew (7:20).

Fruit takes a long time to develop. It often takes years. We are often impatient and want immediate signs. Things that have looked wonderful for a time have borne tragic fruit. Things that appeared common and dull have borne wonderful fruit in time. Lord, give me wisdom!

Your true servant does Your Will. He patterns his life and work among the godly, not the worldly. He patiently sows Your Word and administers the Sacraments, looking to You for the blessing. Your Glory he seeks. He is content to decrease, that You may increase. Thank You for the many like that. Help me to encourage and support them. Give me the wisdom not to be misled by the outwardly successful, the piously eloquent, or the workers of miracles, who are in Satan's service.

Master at Your feet today I pray for help against the enemy and his clever schemes.

A mighty fortress is our God,
A trusty shield and weapon;
Our help is He in all our need,
Our stay, what'er doth happen;
For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe:
Strong mail of craft and power
He weareth in this hour;
On earth is not his equal.

Stood we alone in our own might,
Our striving would be losing;
For us the one true Man doth fight,
The man of God's own choosing.
Who is this chosen One?
'Tis Jesus Christ, the Son,
The Lord of hosts 'tis He
Who wins the victory
In ev'ry field of battle.

Martin Luther

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On October 31, 1982, the world will commemorate the four hundred and sixty-fifth (465) anniversary of one of the greatest events to affect the history of mankind. In fact, never has there been, since the days of the Apostles, a greater event in Christian history than the Protestant Reformation. As we approach this day let us re-examine the historic truths of the Reformation and the ecumenical movement of today.

The ecumenical movement had its beginning in 1910 with the Edinburgh Conference. The cry for unity was then made because of "the scandal of our divisions." But it was not until recent times that the wheels for unity made real progress. We can readily recognize that this spirit of unity has developed great momentum and seemingly will speed on to reunion with the Roman Catholic Church.

There is also great evidence that the Roman Catholic Church has been, of late, going through great changes in its attitude and practices. The Roman Church no longer looks on those outside its doors as heretics or schismatics but as the "separated brethren" that hold fragments of truth. The Jew is no longer unilaterally guilty of the death of Christ, nor Latin the necessary language for worship, so declared the Vatican Council II.

Wholesome changes are occurring in the Church of Rome and some Protestant leaders are optimistic that in the near future all of Christendom will be reunited. However, even with all these changes taking place and the ecumenical movement in high gear we still must ask the question whether the truths of the Reformation are being adhered to or are they being set aside for the sake of reunion? Are the ecumenical churches and the Roman Catholic Church accepting the principles that Luther found

The Reformation: 465 years

The Unchanging Truths

to be basic in the Scriptures or are they set aside for expediency?

It should be quite evident to us that the Church of Rome has not changed and will not change its essential theological position that demanded the Reformation. It should also be evident to us that the leaders of Protestantism are compromising on basic doctrines to foster reunion. With this in mind we as an association, though a small part of Protestantism, must continue to fight the grim battle of truth against error that Martin Luther began. We must stand firm against the majority forces of evil, as Luther did, because the Word of God demands it of us. It was the Word of God that condemned the abuses of Rome and it is that which also condemns any deviation and distortion to which Protestantism may fall guilty.

Let us as a united body carry out the Reformation by ever adhering to and proclaiming the three great and basic doctrines that men such as Luther, Calvin and Crammer held firm. These doctrines are:

I. Only Scripture

1. II Timothy 3:16, 17: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be

perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

2. The leaders of the Reformation saw in the Bible the infallible Word of God which could not be added to or taken away from as man so desired. Nor can man interpret it in any way he pleases, but must, in all interpretations, have a firm exegetical basis, supported by chapter and verse, by which he is guided, with the final appeal being made to the Word of God.

3. Thus we must ever adhere to the Scriptures as the only complete revelation of God and His love for mankind and as the sole norm of the church's faith and life.

II. Only Christ

1. I Timothy 2:5,6: "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus: Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

2. The Lord Jesus Christ is the full revelation of God, "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). It was He who came to reveal God's love for lost mankind and to break down the wall of sin that separated man from God. Christ came to be the substitute on man's behalf in paying the dreaded penalty for sin. It was Christ who came to provide man with righteousness by taking away his sin and is the only mediator between God and man whom we can trust.

3. May we never fall prey, as the Church of Rome did, to the deceiving power of Satan and trust any church, system or person as our mediator other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. Only Grace

1. Ephesians 2: 8,9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."

2. For the leaders of the Reformation this was the heart of the Gospel and the end of the mass. Christ provided one offering for sin, an offering that satisfied God's requirements and now we need not try to work out our salvation by religious exercises but by faith receive Christ's finished work as that which makes us pleasing to God.



by Pastor
Roy Warwick,
Aberdeen, S. Dak.

HOW GOD GUIDES

... and how He doesn't

two
hundred
year-old
advice

by John
Newton

It is well for those who are duly sensible of their own weakness and fallibility, and of the difficulties with which they are surrounded in life, that the Lord has promised to guide His people with His eye, and to cause them to hear a word behind them, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it," when they are in danger of turning aside either to the right hand or to the left. For this purpose, He has given us the written Word to be a lamp to our feet, and encouraged us to pray for the teaching of His Holy Spirit, that we may rightly understand and apply it.

The Scripture cannot deceive us, if rightly understood; but it may, if per-

verted, prove the occasion of confirming us in a mistake. The Holy Spirit cannot mislead those who are under His influence; but we may suppose that we are so, when we are not. Many have been deceived as to what they ought to do, or in forming a judgment beforehand of events in which they are nearly concerned, by expecting direction in ways which the Lord has not warranted. I shall mention some of these, for it is not easy to enumerate them all.

Some persons, when two or more things have been in view, and they could not immediately determine which to prefer, have committed their

case to the Lord by prayer, and have then proceeded to cast lots: taking it for granted, that after such a solemn appeal, the turning up of the lot might be safely rested in as an answer from God.

It is true, the Scripture, and indeed right reason, assures us, that the Lord disposes the lot; and there are several cases recorded in the Old Testament, in which lots were used by divine appointment; but I think neither these, nor the choosing Matthias by lot to the apostleship, are proper precedents for our conduct. In the division of the lands of Canaan, in the affair of Achan, and in the nomination of Saul to the kingdom, recourse was had to lots by God's

TRUTHS . . .

3. Christ became the sacrifice once for all and now He offers salvation as a free gift not to be earned but to be received. It is not a works' righteousness, not a faith **plus** works basis, but all of grace that God may have the praise.

4. How easy it is to fall prey to Satan's deceiving power and try to please God through our own ability. Saint and sinner alike try to please God in themselves, sinner in working salvation, saint in thinking his behavior makes him acceptable to God. But our acceptability to God is never based on us but on what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us. May we, as Martin Luther,

"But our acceptability to God is never based on us but on what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us."

stand on the firm foundation of salvation by grace alone so that we do not falter or fall in these perilous times.

These were the basic doctrines of the Reformation. Are we living these truths or are we living a lie and thus able to compromise? The truth is dogmatic, it cannot compromise. Thus the only way possible for reunion is a reunion about God's Word as the only norm for church faith and life,; with the Lord Jesus Christ as our only Mediator, and grace the only way of salvation. May we as individuals and as a church body ever bear witness to these truths till Jesus comes again.

express command. The instance of Matthias likewise was singular, such as can never happen again; namely, the choice of an apostle, who would not have been upon a par with the rest, who were chosen immediately by the Lord, unless *He* had been pleased to interpose in some extraordinary way; and all these were before the canon of Scripture was completed, and before the full descent and communication of the Holy Spirit, who was promised to dwell with the church to the end of time.

Under the New Testament dispensation, we are invited to come boldly to the throne of grace, to make our requests known to the Lord, and to cast our cares upon Him: but we have neither precept nor promise respecting the use of lots; and to have recourse to them without His appointment, seems to be tempting Him rather than honoring Him, and to savor more of presumption than dependence. The effects likewise of this expedient have often been unhappy and hurtful: a sufficient proof how little it is to be trusted to as a guide of our conduct.

Others, when in doubt, have opened the Bible at a venture, and expected to find something to direct them in the first verse they should cast their eye upon. It is no small discredit to this practice, that the heathen, who knew not the Bible, used some of their favorite books in the same way: and grounded their persuasions of what they ought to do, or of what should befall them, according to the passage they happened to open upon. Among the Romans, the writings of Virgil were frequently consulted upon these occasions; which gave rise to the well-known expression of the *Sortes Virgilianae*. And indeed Virgil is as well adapted to satisfy inquirers in this way, as the Bible itself; for if people will be governed by the occurrence of a single text of Scripture, without regarding the context, or duly comparing the Word of God, and with their own circumstances, they may commit the greatest extravagances, expect the greatest impossibilities, and contradict the plainest dictates of common sense, while they think they have the Word of God on their side.

Can the opening upon II Samuel 7:3 when Nathan said unto David, "Do all that is in thine heart, for the Lord is with thee," be sufficient to determine the lawfulness or expediency of actions? Or

"Others, when in doubt, have opened the Bible at a venture, and expected to find something to direct them in the first verse they should cast their eye upon."

can a glance of the eye upon our Lord's words to the woman of Canaan, Matthew 15:28, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt," amount to a proof, that the present earnest desire of the mind (whatever it may be) shall be surely accomplished? Yet it is certain that matters big with important consequences have been engaged in, and the most sanguine expectations formed, upon no better warrant than dipping (as it is called) upon a text of Scripture.

A sudden strong impression of a text, that seems to have some resemblance to the concern upon the mind, has been accepted by many as an infallible token that they were right, and that things would go just as they would have them; or, on the other hand, if the passage bore a threatening aspect, it has filled them with fears and disquietudes, which they have afterwards found were groundless and unnecessary. These impressions, being more out of their power than the former method, have been more generally regarded and trusted to, but have frequently proved no less delusive.

It has allowed, that such impressions of a precept or a promise may humble, animate, or comfort the soul, by giving it a lively sense of the truth contained in the words; and many of the Lord's people have been instructed and supported (especially in a time of trouble) by some seasonable word of grace applied and sealed by His Spirit with power to their hearts. But if impressions or impulses are received as a voice from heaven, directing to such particular actions as could not be

proved to be duties without them, a person may be unwarily misled into great evils and gross delusions; and many have been so. There is no doubt but the enemy of our souls, if permitted, can furnish us with Scriptures in abundance in this way.

Some persons judge of the nature and event of their designs, by the freedom which they find in prayer. They say they commit their ways to God, seek His direction, and are favored with much enlargement of spirit; and therefore they cannot doubt but what they have in view is acceptable in the Lord's sight. I would not absolutely reject every plea of this kind, yet without other corroborating evidence, I could not admit it in proof of what it is brought for. It is not *always* easy to determine when we have spiritual freedom in prayer. Self is deceitful; and when our hearts are much fixed and bent upon a thing, this may put words and earnestness into our mouths. Too often we first secretly determine for ourselves, and then come to ask counsel of God; in such a disposition we are ready to catch at everything that may seem to favor our darling scheme; and the Lord, for the detection and chastisement of our hypocrisy (for hypocrisy it is, though perhaps hardly perceptible to ourselves), may answer us according to our idols; see Ezekiel 14:3-4.

Besides, the grace of prayer may be in exercise, when the subject-matter of the prayer may be founded upon a mistake, from the intervention of circumstances which we are unacquainted with. Thus I may have a friend in a distant country, I hope he is alive, I pray for him, and it is my duty so to do. The Lord, by His Spirit, assists His people in what is their present duty. If I am enabled to pray with much liberty for my distant friend, it may be a proof that the Spirit of the Lord is pleased to assist my infirmities, but it is no proof that my friend is certainly alive at the time I am praying for him: and if the next time I pray for him I should find my spirit straightened, I am not to conclude that my friend is dead, and therefore the Lord will not assist me in praying for him any longer.

Once more: A remarkable dream has sometimes been thought as decisive as any of the foregoing methods of knowing the will of God. That many whole-

◇



the worship service

The chief end of any service which calls itself religious is to create the sense of the presence of God; to withdraw the human spirit from things visible to things invisible and thus, for a time at least, make the spiritual world more real than the sensible world. Thus the deepest need is a revival of the attitude of awe and wonder in worship.

Raymond Calkins

GUIDES . . .

some and seasonable admonitions have been received in dreams, I willingly allow; but, though they may be occasionally noticed, to pay a great attention to dreams, especially to be guided by them, to form our sentiments, conduct, or expectations, upon them, is superstitious and dangerous. The promises are not made to those who dream, but to those who watch.

Upon the whole, though the Lord may give to some persons, upon some occasions, a hint or encouragement out of the common way; yet expressly to look for and seek His direction in such things as I have mentioned, is unscriptural and ensnaring. I could fill many sheets with a detail of the inconveniences and evils which have followed such a dependence, within the course of my own observation. I have seen some presuming they were doing God service, while acting in contradiction to His express commands. I have known others infatuated to believe a lie, declaring themselves as cured, beyond the shadow of a doubt, of things which, after all, never came to pass; and when at length disappointed, Satan has improved the occasion to make them doubt of the plainest and most important truths, and to account their whole former experience a delusion. By these things weak believers have been stum-

bled, cavils and offences against the Gospel multiplied, and the ways of truth evil spoken of.

But how then may the Lord's guidance be expected? After what has been premised negatively, the question may be answered in a few words. In general, He guides and directs His people, by affording them, in answer to prayer, the light of His Holy Spirit, which enables them to understand and to love the Scriptures.

The Word of God is not to be used as a lottery; nor is it designed to instruct us by shreds and scraps, which, detached from their proper places, have no determinate import; but it is to furnish us with just principles, right apprehensions to regulate our judgments and affections, and thereby to influence and direct our conduct. They who study the Scriptures, in an humble dependence upon divine teaching, are convinced of their own weakness, are taught to make a true estimate of everything around them, are gradually formed into a spirit of submission to the will of God, discover the nature and duties of their several situations and relations in life, and the snares and temptations to which they are exposed. The Word of God dwells richly in them, is a preservative from error, a light to their feet, and a spring of strength and consolation. By

treasuring up the doctrines, precepts, promises, examples, and exhortations of Scripture, in their minds, and daily comparing themselves with the rule by which they walk, they grow into an habitual frame of spiritual wisdom, and acquire a gracious taste, which enables them to judge of right and wrong with a degree of readiness and certainty, as a musical ear judges of sounds. And they are seldom mistaken, because they are influenced by the love of Christ, which rules in their hearts, and a regard to the glory of God, which is the great object they have in view.

In particular cases, the Lord opens and shuts for them, breaks down walls of difficulty which obstruct their path, or hedges up their way with thorns, when they are in danger of going wrong, by the dispensations of His providence. They know that their concern-

“But how then may the Lord's guidance be expected?”

Some Americans contend that there is only one Christian and pro-American position on certain public issues. Others insist that proponents of a "Christian" public policy have formed organizations such as the Moral Majority, the Religious Roundtable and the Christian Voice to promote their views. Opponents have joined forces in People

Should Christian morality become the prevailing public morality?

ments are in His hands; they are willing to follow whither and when He leads; but are afraid of going before Him. Therefore they are not impatient: because they believe, they will not make haste, but wait daily upon Him in prayer; especially when they find their hearts most engaged in any purpose or pursuit, they are most jealous of being deceived by appearances, and dare not move farther or faster than they can perceive His light shining upon their paths. I express at least their desire, if not their attainment: thus they would be. And though there are seasons when faith languishes, and self too much prevails, this is their general disposition; and the Lord, whom they serve, does not disappoint their expectations. He leads them by a right way, preserves them from a thousand snares, and satisfies them that He is and will be their guide even unto death.

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John Newton (1725-1807), once a militant atheist and slave trader, later became a preacher and key figure in the English Revival after a dramatic conversion experience. He wrote several hymns, including "Amazing Grace." This article is taken from Letters of John Newton (Banner of Truth).

"CHRISTIAN" PUBLIC POLICY

a hotly
contested issue!

for the American Way, an organization founded to counter the influence of what it calls "the radical religious right."

Moral majoritarians want their views to become public policy. They want Christian morality to become the prevailing public morality. People for the American Way claims to affirm the right of every American to hold any opinion.

The controversy poses a question. Is there such a thing as a *Christian* public policy? And if there is, what obligation do Christians have to implement it?

There is a distinct difference between the basis for Christian morality and the basis for public morality and policy. Christian morality is determined by God and based upon His revealed law. Public morality is determined by the state and is based upon natural law.

A proper understanding of the term natural law is a key to the current controversy. What is natural law?

St. Paul provides the answer. "Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature the things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts" (Romans 2:14, 15).

Natural law is the law "written" by God on every person's heart. At the time of creation, Adam could read perfectly what God had written on his

heart. The fall changed that. Sin obscured what God has written. Adam couldn't read it perfectly anymore. But the fall didn't erase it completely. It's still there. It still functions.

Fallen man is still programmed by his Creator. Just as God programmed eyes to see, the ears to hear, the tongue to taste, so He programmed the mind to operate with the concepts of right and wrong. Not just the concepts. Content is also involved.

Dr. James Dobson, the popular psychologist, speaks about certain things being "wired into the brain." That wiring includes natural law. Rational minds know instinctively that it is wrong to lie, to cheat, to steal, to kill, to injure. And they know instinctively that the corresponding virtues are right.

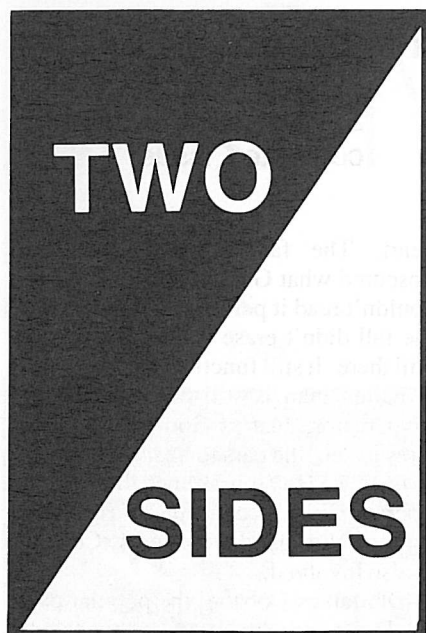
Natural law is the basis today of all civil law. Natural law is related to the moral law of God, but natural law is not identical to the moral law. Moral law is an expression of the holy immutable will of God. Moral law governs our relationships to one another and to God as

"Moral majoritarians want their views to become public policy."

I ONLY LIVE ONCE

I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature let me do it now. Let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.

Stephen Grellet



"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" | Peter 3:12.

There are two sides in the spiritual realm, in direct and constant opposition to each other. There is good and evil, God and Satan, and the battleground is all around us and in our hearts.

Satan is a clever strategist. He has convinced many a Christian

or would-be Christian that there is neutral ground on which to stand in the midst of the battle. Thus he claims the lives and souls of thousands. When it appears that there is neutral ground regarding doctrinal issues, a comfortable place to stand between those who hold closely to the Word and those who don't take it so seriously, that is Satan's soil. When it seems there is neutral territory regarding moral issues, a comfortable place to stand between those who oppose what God condemns and those who embrace what God condemns, that is Satan's territory. When it seems that there is a comfortable bit of neutral real estate to stand on with regard to a disciplined Christian life, somewhere between those who seem, to the world, fanatical in their devotion to Christ and those whose so-called Christianity doesn't do anything to curb sin in their life—that is Satan's domain.

There is no neutral ground. To be righteous means to oppose sin and evil, in us and around us. The Lord's watchful Father eyes are over those whose repentant hearts belong to Jesus—His ears open to their prayers. He opposes those who do evil. Not to, in faith, take up spiritual arms against sin and evil is to aid and abet the enemy; thus we oppose God and He must oppose us.

We live in a nation of neutral-mindedness. God help us to cast ourselves daily before Him in humble repentance and faith. May our love for God and eternal souls around us not dim, nor our perception of what is good and what is evil—according to the Word of the One who alone is good.

MORALITY . . .

members of God's family, the church. Civil law governs our relationship to one another as members of the human family, the state.

Do you see then how the Christian's position is different from that of a non-Christian? A Christian recognizes both God's claim on his life as well as the state's. He holds a dual citizenship both in the church and in the state. A non-Christian is subject only to the state. He employs only the natural law to order and structure the society in which he participates.

This explains in part why some Christians and some churches find it impossible to give full support to organizations such as the Moral Majority and the Religious Roundtable. We sympathize with many of their objectives, their pro-life advocacy, integrity in government, opposition to pornography, to media violence and the like. But we do not agree on what the proper means are for achieving objectives.

Moral majoritarians tend to confuse natural law and moral law. They want to employ a tool God gave His church to be a guide for Christian living as a tool of civil government. At the time of the Reformation, John Calvin did the same thing. His spiritual descendants today are still doing it. Martin Luther refused to confuse natural law with moral law and their functions. Luther distinguished between God's left hand

and God's right hand. According to Luther God employs His left hand to rule His world. He employs His right hand to rule His church. The church employs God's law and gospel to do its job. The state employs natural law to do its job. God does not want the state to interfere with the business of His church, and He does not want His church to interfere with the business of the state.

When Christians join hands to insist upon a Christian public policy or morality, they are ignoring God's method of operation in church and state. They are confusing His right hand with His left hand, and when that happens no one gets a fair shake. It creates confusion.

Does this mean that as Christians we have no interest in public policy or morality? Of course not. It means that in such matters we will, as good citizens, argue our point and base our case on natural law rather than on God's written law in the Scriptures. We will recognize that in a pluralistic society, we cannot demand that non-Christians submit to biblical perspective on public policy or morality.

God did not give us the Bible as a code book for public policy.

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Pastor Dale Mellgren
Voice of the Valley
Kalispell, Montana

editorials

LIFE THROUGH FAITH

"The just shall live by faith." Those words are on the cover of this issue. While we associate Luther's 95 Theses as the document which set in motion the Protestant Reformation, and the motto, "The Word Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone," as the battle cry of that movement, the words with which we began are the ones which placed Martin Luther on an irreversible course. For it was these five short words from Romans 1:17, in the English of the King James Version, which brought him peace of soul and made him a champion of salvation by grace through faith.

All our readers must know by this time something of the soul struggle through which the young monk Luther went as he sought peace in his heart before a righteous God. Earnest and devout beyond most others, he could not be satisfied in his heart that he had gained God's favor even though he had performed every act of penance his church suggested or demanded. This included a pilgrimage to holy Rome and all the indulgences to be received in those sacred precincts.

But release came to him in a very simple way, as is often the case when a sinner finds peace with God. Release, yes, salvation itself, came not through learned argument, philosophical jousting or psychological sleight of hand, but through the penetration of his mind and heart of the truth from the Bible that a person is saved by faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for sinners at Calvary. That was it and the whole matter.

It was out of that personal experience that Luther felt compelled to attack abuses in his church, notably the idea that God's grace could be purchased by money, as in the system of indulgences. One thing led to another and Luther, standing against a really formidable opponent in the Church of Rome, realized that his only hope was to stand upon the Word of God. He issued the challenge to his debaters to point out his errors on the basis of the Bible. When none could do that he felt vindicated that his beliefs were correct. We are safe when we follow the same course.

Salvation by grace through faith is well established in the Lutheran Confessions. In the documents of many other denominations the same stand is taken. There should be no danger, then, of people having any false ideas about this, right? Wrong! There is ample evidence that church people

somehow feel that they can do something toward their salvation, indeed, have done something good, which God has noted in His great celestial record books.

It may be a fine attendance record at church services. It may be active participation in church activities, including the holding of offices. It may be a list of contributions to church work bordering on the generous, possibly pace-setting in the congregation. It may be a reputation for being kind and helpful, a doer of good deeds. Surely these things and others count toward salvation, don't they? No, the Bible doesn't give any hope in that direction. The words of Paul are authoritative here: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2: 8,9).

Any time a person begins to tally his merits one of two things will happen. He may, as Paul suggests, begin to boast and that becomes a dead-end street. Adam and Eve lost Paradise in Eden because of pride and it is unlikely anyone will share in the Paradise to come if he boasts of his own merits. So pride in oneself is ruled out.

The other thing which can happen if a person counts his good deeds toward salvation is that he will fall into despair, as Luther did, because he does not know when he has done enough. And that should really trouble the sinner: "When have I done enough to satisfy the demands of a holy God?" Or, falling short of the despair of Luther, a person may resign himself to hoping that the Lord will be merciful if he hasn't done as much as he should have.

ASSOCIATION OF FREE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS 3110 EAST MEDICINE LAKE BOULEVARD MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55441

BUDGET RECEIPTS February 1-August 31

Fund	Total Budget	Total Rec'd to Date	% of Total (Ideal 58%)
General Fund	\$170,000.00	\$ 71,507.85	42
Schools			
AFLTS	86,381.00	39,804.41	46
AFLBS	154,162.00	52,717.95	34
Home Missions	254,380.00	70,890.88	28
World Missions	218,880.00	89,207.21	41
Praise Fund	30,200.00	19,882.07	66
Total	\$914,003.00	\$344,010.37	38
1981-82	\$809,206.00	\$297,345.20	37

THE WRECKING CREW

A good thing to remember,
And a better thing to do,
Is to work with the construction
And not the wrecking crew.

—Selected

THE WOMEN'S PAGE

Honorary memberships . . . Wallace, S. Dak.



Anna Gulbran and Louise Hogstad received honorary membership pins and certificates from Calvary Lutheran WMF.

Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matt. 18:3



Bethany Lutheran Church of Binford, N. Dak., honored six Cradle Roll children: Luke Oien; Gracia Berge, held by Stacey Adrian; Travis Adrian; Angela Ekern, held by DaRahn Miller; Tanya Oien, Sam Leadens, held by Shawn Adrian.

Sedan Minn.



Scandia Lutheran WMF honored Mrs. Gary Knutson and Mrs. Casper Thompson.



Scandia WMF provided baked goods, crafts, and produce at the Glenwood, Minn. Market Day on September 11.

Lutherans for Life announce convention

"In His Image" is the theme of the national Lutherans For Life convention to be held November 12 and 13 at the Astor Hotel and Conference Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The convention will focus on human life as God's creation explored from the unique Lutheran perspective. Also unique is the variety of Lutheran Church bodies represented among the speakers and workshop leaders. For example, the convention begins on Friday evening, November 12, with the keynote address by Rev. Richard Neuhaus, an Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches pastor, author and Lutherans For Life board of directors member.

Dr. Ralph Bohlmann, president of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, will open the Saturday session. Work-

shops on various topics will follow: Lutheran pro-life theology, pro-life Bible studies, adoption, pro-life counseling, legislation, euthanasia, and others.

Other noted speakers include Dr. Jean Garton, president of Lutherans For Life, and Dr. R. John Buuck, president of Concordia College Milwaukee.

Registration forms and information on fees and accommodations may be obtained by writing to: Lutherans For Life, 275 N. Syndicate, St. Paul, Minnesota 55104; or by calling Cathy Marriott, president of Wisconsin Lutherans For Life, at (414) 367-4291. The address for Wisconsin Lutherans For Life is 924 E. Juneau, Milwaukee 53202.

WMF Bible Study

Ruth

November 1982

Review of the Book of Ruth

Ruth is the one old Testament book which sets forth the Person of the Redeemer and also *points* to the work of Christ our Kinsman-Redeemer.

1. Note the ways in which Naomi and the Prodigal Son are similar. _____
2. List the ways in which Boaz is a type of Christ. _____
3. How does the Book reveal that salvation is not by works but by faith? Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 3:23; Hebrews 2:1-4; Acts 16:31; Proverbs 23:26 _____
4. What does this Book reveal regarding the Gentiles? _____
5. Consider again the case of Orpah and Ruth. What warning does it bring? _____

God used every possible means to woo these people to Himself. Naomi only saw the "shadow," but back of the shadow was "His hand outstretched caressingly," wooing her back to Himself and the blessings of Bethlehem.

Truly, God's patience and love are boundless. Are we going to make it necessary for God to use strong measure to woo us back?

NOTE: To this day the Lord measures out joy as well as sorrow to His children. He may send affliction and tribulation for many years, but He will often grant a peaceful old age. Our trust in Him must never waver, for His compassion fails not, and His merciful promises will not fall to the ground.

There is One who is near of kin, who has become our Brother, who has taken upon Himself flesh like as we have and has been made in all points like unto us, apart from sin, that He might confer on us the pardon of sin and bring us into the liberty of the sons of God.

Let us exclaim with Naomi, "This Man is near of kin to us! Blessed be He of the Lord, who hath not left off His kindness to the living and to the dead!" Let us this day, while it is today, come unto Him and confess our sins, I John 1:9. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near." "... behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (Is. 55:6; II Cor. 6:2).

This is our last lesson for 1982. As we approach the Christmas season, let us renew our lives in Christ, those of us who know Him as our personal Savior; and those who have not accepted Him, surrender *all* to Him now. May your Christmas joys be new souls added to the kingdom, as the angels in Heaven will be rejoicing.

A blessed and joyous Yuletide season to each one of you!

Mrs. Palmer Haugen
Portland, North Dakota

Our November project is Cradle Roll/Junior Mission. Our budget prayer calendar is very informative concerning the use of these funds. Continue to pray for Missionary Priscilla Wold as she serves on our mission field in Brazil. Your gifts may be sent to Mrs. Vernon Nelson, WMF treasurer.

We have come to the close of another year and are grateful for your gifts and prayer support for our WMF work. Although some of you do not hold a regular meeting in December, please remember to support the project of the month which is General Fund. A fund which is very necessary to continue the work of our national WMF. Offerings may be sent to the national treasurer—Mrs. Vernon Nelson, Box 261, Leeds, North Dakota 58346.

Mrs. Grace Syverson—WMF Pres.

news of the churches

Zion, Valley City, N. Dak.



On August 8, new members were received into membership in Zion Lutheran Church, Green Township, Valley City, N. Dak. A potluck picnic at Chautauqua Park was held to honor the new members.

Shown here are Mr. and Mrs. Rodney Latt and Michelle, left, Pastor Curtis Emerson and Mrs. and Mrs. Greg Svenningsen. Sarah Svenningsen is not pictured.

Cumberland, Wis.



The Vacation Bible School at Section Ten Lutheran Church, Cumberland, Wis., in June.



The teaching staff at Section Ten. Pastor John Kjos is pictured in the back row.

from here and there

Roseau, Minn.—Rally day at Roseau Lutheran Church was held on Sept. 12. A film, "Humpty Dumpty," was shown after the worship service for the whole congregation. Helium-filled balloons were sent up by the children. The balloons contained Gospel messages.

Minnewaukan, N. Dak.—Former pastor at Trinity Lutheran, Eugene Enderlein, and his wife will be at Trinity Oct. 16 and 17 for a combined Sunday School Teachers' Training Workshop and Mission Sunday. He will preach at both Trinity and Antiochia on Sunday morning. A fellowship dinner will follow the service at Antiochia.

Drummond, Wis.—A centennial celebration was held at Drummond Lutheran the first weekend in July. The event gave visitors who came back a chance to see improvements made in the church building.

Kalispell, Mont.—The Family Bible Camp for Stillwater and Faith Lutheran Churches was held at Dickey Lake, Aug. 6-8. Guest speaker was Lay Pastor Gene Sundby, Outlook, Sask.

Thief River Falls, Minn.—Lay Pastor and Mrs. Melvin Walla, Fergus Falls, Minn., were at the opening meeting of the Wednesday night classes for children at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. The classes have been held for a number of years. Pastor Walla once served Our Saviour's congregation.

Minneapolis, Minn.—Pastor and Mrs. J. G. Erickson attended the ordination of their son James into the ministry of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod on August 22 at Alpena, Mich. Rev. James Erickson is associate pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church there.

Personalities

New address for **Pastor and Mrs. Jay Eberth and family**, formerly of Fosston, Minn., is 4158 Litchfield, Dorr, Mich. 49323.

And **Pastor and Mrs. R. S. Persson**, previously in Bemidji, Minn., are now living at R.R.2, Box 403, Pardeeville, Wis. 53954.

Newfolden, Minn.—Open house at the parsonage for Westaker and Bethania Churches was held on Sunday, August 15. The parsonage was added to and re-modeled before the coming of the new residents last winter, Rev. and Mrs. Larry Haagenson and sons.

Badger, Minn.—The offering of approximately \$180 at the parish picnic at the home of Lay Pastor and Mrs. Gustav Nordvall last summer was given to the Lutheran Ambassador radio fund. The program comes over station KRWB, Roseau. Some people from Piney and Wampum, Man., also attended the picnic, besides the members of Oiland and Badger Creek Churches.

Stacy, Minn.—When Ev. Philip Hanson is in Sunnyside Church this fall, Oct. 31-Nov. 4, he will be leading a series of studies in Ephesians. The theme of the series will be "The Unsearchable Riches of Christ."

Dalton, Minn.—Sarpsborg Lutheran Church celebrated 110 years of history at a service on September 19. The congregation is one of the oldest in the AFLC.

Greenbush, Minn.—Bethlehem Lutheran Church is having a series of studies in a survey of the New Testament this fall. They are led by the pastor, Rev. Raynard Huglen.

Rev. Ernst Dahle dies

Rev. Ernst I. Dahle, 82, passed away in Minneapolis, Minn., on Sept. 13. He was a brother of Rev. T. F. Dahle, Spicer, Minn., of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. Two other brothers, Anker and Viggo, both deceased, were also Lutheran pastors.

Ernst Dahle was born on March 29, 1900, at Aitkin, Minn., to Rev. and Mrs. Ole Dahle. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Minnesota and his divinity degree from Augsburg Seminary, both in Minneapolis. His only pastorate was Elmwood Lutheran Church in northeast Minneapolis, which he assumed in 1939 following ordination.

He had also studied at schools of music and art. He was a gifted artist (painter).

Ernst Dahle was united in marriage to Mabel Anderson in 1937. She preceded him in death.

Continued on p. 16

To Bella Coola and back

By Raynard Huglen, Editor
(The last of three parts)

Review

The towns of Bella Coola and Hagensborg lie at the west end of a beautiful valley on the west coast of British Columbia. The area was settled by Norwegian "colonists" in 1894, augmented by others who came the next year. In August I visited the valley. In this final installment I tell about my last day there and the return trip, with a stop at banff, Alta., for a day.

Stener Saugstad

Early on Monday morning, August 9, Stener Saugstad, a grandson of Rev. Christian Saugstad, who had led those first colonists to Bella Coola, drove up to my motel in his pickup to take me to his home beyond Hagensborg, a distance of some 15 miles. There his wife Beverly served us a breakfast of rainbow trout and potatoes. The trout was delicious.

The Saugstads have a beautiful location for their home, on the first slopes of a mountain. From the yard one can look up to those mysterious, inaccessible rocky walls and crags. The Saugstads said that they expect black bears to come into their yard in the fall of the year. And one time a grizzly appeared too. So they keep an eye peeled for signs of these visitors.

Stener and Beverly took me for a long drive to the east reaches of the Valley and part way up the "hill" which one must ascend if he is to leave the place by road. It is from eight to 12 miles in length and has several switchbacks. It looked to me the way highways through the Rockies must have looked back in the 1920s. The road was narrow, gravel and without guard rails. Only at the switchbacks were there any barriers. Yet all sorts of vehicles, including trucks, traverse the road which was built largely by local initiative and without great outside funds.

That day I saw a few salmon which had come up the creeks and rivers to spawn. The run was just beginning. At one place an Indian man and wife were operating a counting station to keep

track of the various varieties of salmon moving up stream.

Also saw the two places where the Ole Lokken family had lived, one on each side of the Bella Coola River. While I am not acquainted with him, I did attend the ordination service of John Lokken, a son, at the Lutheran Free Church's annual conference in Willmar, Minn., in 1948. He is a pastor in Canada and has a brother, Oscar, who is also a pastor. Ole Lokken had a nephew and niece at Newfolden.

Stener, who is involved in a small lumbering business, gave me several things written by his grandfather, in beautiful handwriting, and a letter to Rev. Saugstad from Rev. Ole Paulson, "Augsburg's grandfather," written in August 1895, from Blanchardville, Wis. Naturally, I was very pleased to get these things.

The Trip Out

That evening a granddaughter of Pastor Saugstad, Georgia Vestvik, and her daughter, Lois Casperson, came to visit me. Georgia is a daughter of Camilla, whereas Stener is a son of Gunnar, children of the elder Saugstad.

In the Valley the term "going out" refers to leaving the Valley for Prince Rupert, Williams Lake, Vancouver, etc. And the time for me to "go out" came on that Tuesday morning. I carried my bags the two blocks or so and boarded the Cariboo Stage Lines coach. Before getting on my gaze

swept over those mountains I had come to love. If I had several lives to live, I can see myself living one of them in the Bella Coola Valley.

Our bus driver, Hank van T., was a folksy sort and was making his first trip in a month after surgery (he had made the trip in the day before). At every stop he seemed to know people and often the passengers who were boarding and he would exchange pleasantries with them. Quite a difference from some bus drivers with whom I have ridden, even if the sign says they are courteous. Hank would also point out items of interest and twice called our attention to lone bald eagles he had spotted sitting by streams waiting for an unsuspecting fish to come by. One was only a couple of rods from us.

And the bus would stop wherever it was hailed down. At one place we picked up two young boys from Germany who were mountain climbers. At another stop a boy of four or five got on and while we were still stopped called to his mother outside, "Boy, Mom, this bus sure has a big steering wheel!"

We drove down the road already a little familiar to me, past the Augsburg Church and parsonage, past the Stener Saugstad home, and a while later, on up the "hill." Then followed many miles through largely uninhabited country. Much of the road was gravel. Occasionally there would be evidence of a ranching operation. Scattered along the roadway which wound around on a plateau area once we left the Valley were long-stemmed blue flowers. The bus driver called them fireweed. Anyway, they were another touch of beauty given us by the Lord.

After an early noon lunch stop at a fine restaurant at Nimpo Lake we continued on, arriving at the city of Williams Lake, on the banks of the Fraser River. The trip had taken almost eight hours and we were in the closest town by road to Bella Coola and Hagensborg.

Banff

After a six hour wait in Williams Lake and an all-night bus ride, I arrived in Banff, Alta., the famous resort town of western Canada. The town was packed with tourists but I was still able to get a place to stay at a reasonable cost. I joined the throngs of people



The old parsonage at Hagensborg.

BELLA COOLA . . .

going in and out of the souvenir shops and other stores on the main avenue. I visited again the flower gardens up by the administration building. So many miracles of beauty from God's hand. I was in the Banff Springs Hotel for the first time. Had never dared go in before. It's the fashionable hotel in Banff. There I mingled for a while with the great and near great.

By the way, when I left Banff the two railroad cars carrying Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau and his vacation party were standing near the station. You may have heard that some western Canadians were very unhappy to have him vacationing in their part of the country.

In Banff, I stopped in at both the Episcopal and United Churches, in the downtown area. They were quiet, restful, worshipful places. I hope many people stop in for times of reflection and prayer. But how often do we do that in our own churches? Must we enter only when there is a service scheduled?

Heading East

There is always a strange feeling when one leaves the mountains. The same can be said when one enters them. But after we left the mountains east of Banff, I found myself asking, "Where are the mountains?" They had been left behind, until the next time, God willing. I am a child of the plains and flat lands, but I am grateful that I have been privileged to see the mountains, too, and the sea.

Our train came into Calgary half an hour late. No matter; perhaps our hour and 10-minute stop could be shortened. But our departure time of 9:50 p.m. came and went. Eleven o'clock came and went. Somewhere along the line word came that we were waiting for a bus from Edmonton to make connections. Still later we heard that the train from Edmonton had been involved in an accident and hence the delay. Finally a large group of passengers did join us and after waiting a while longer we were underway at 2 a.m., four hours and 10 minutes late and having been in the station closer to five hours.

As the story unfolded, and I overheard it best from a boy of 10 or so, the small train bound for Calgary had struck a truck trailer, I believe it was a

gravel truck, at Lacombe. The engineer had told the boy later, "I thought the truck was going to make it across before we got there." Fortunately, no one was killed. But a number of people were taken to hospital and all but two were able to continue on if they wished.

That same boy offered a prayer to the Lord as he sat by a lady I took to be his grandmother. I couldn't hear it all but I believe it was a general prayer of thanksgiving and of concern for all who had been involved in the mishap. What a nice thing to hear.

Also among the passengers who joined us at Calgary were three Italian Canadians from Prince Rupert. They were Angelo and his wife Savrina and his brother Joe. They were going to vacation with friends in Winnipeg.

On that last day on the train, I ate a noon meal of spaghetti and meatballs in the lunch car. My table-mates were two men, an engineer and a fireman, not the two who were on duty, though. But these men were going to take over at Broadview, Sask., and drive to Brandon, Man. They had been in Regina during their layover, as a change of pace. Both were young men, much younger than our visions of old Casey at the throttle. They told me that at that time they thought we were travelling at 75 to 80 miles per hour.

And on to Winnipeg where I was met by family members. We were almost 2-1/2 hours late and hadn't made up as much time as had been predicted.

In all it had been a fine trip and I am thankful I could make the journey to Bella Coola. That place is no longer a dot on the map, but it is people and beautiful scenery, and great trees and history and Mt. Saugstad, visible at times from the Valley, tribute to a Norwegian Lutheran minister who had the courage to lead his people to a new and promising land.

Mt. Rundle at Banff.



With our evangelist-youth worker

"O seek the Lord today! Today He hath salvation." So wrote the hymnwriter and such is the truth in our day. Pastor Kenneth Pentti is our evangelist. He is bringing this message to our church. There are many invitations. He is working hard to meet them. Pray for him. Here are some coming appointments.

Roslyn, S. Dak.

Lake Region Lutheran Church
Oct. 24-28

Rodney Stueland, lay pastor

Greenbush, Minn.

United Lutheran Church
Oct. 31-Nov. 4

Burton Rygh, lay pastor

Lake Stevens, Wash.

Elim Lutheran Church
Nov. 7-11

Richard Anderson, pastor

Thief River Falls, Minn.

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
Nov. 28-Dec. 2

Leslie Galland, pastor

Leeds, N. Dak.

Lebanon Lutheran Church
Dec. 5-9

LeRoy Flickinger, pastor

Preaching missions

Stacy, Minn.

Sunnyside Lutheran Church
Wendell Johnson, pastor

Oct. 31-Nov. 4

Ev. Philip Hanson, LEM, speaker

Roseau, Minn.

Place to be announced
Larry Severson, pastor

Oct. 31-Nov. 3

Lay Pastor Gene Sundby, Outlook
Sask., speaker

Eagle Butte, S. Dak.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church
Ernest Langness, pastor

Nov. 28-Dec. 2

Ev. Philip Hanson, LEM, speaker

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

What shall I do with my life?

At many conventions of young people time is spent in conference discussing the subject, "What Shall I Do with My Life?" It appears that the question evokes great interest. The desire has been expressed that a definite answer to this question might be made available for our young people generally. Since the question is one frequently asked by young people, it would appear that discussion of it is worth while.

What shall I do with my life?

Certainly this is a supremely important question. Each of us has just one life to live. When it is done, we have no chance to live it over again. To be sure, if we get on the wrong track, it is possible by the grace of God to switch over later in life and try to make up for lost time; but how much more splendid is it not to get started right at the beginning and spend our whole lives in fruitful ways. Life is too short for experimentation. The paramount matter for every young person, just as early in life as possible, is to reach a decision as to what to do with his life.

Some young people look very cheaply upon life. They do not seem to think that their lives count for much. This is a wrong - yes, a sinful way of looking at life. Life is a gift from God, and every gift of God is of large importance, certainly such a wonderful thing as a human life. Every person should look upon his life as a holy thing, as an exalted possession, as a divine trust given him to administer and for which he is some day to render account. This means that, in a right sense, every person should be supremely ambitious-not for selfish glory, but for honoring his Creator by the way in which life is spent.

What shall I do with my life?

From a Christian point of view the only right answer to this question is: give it to God.

But what does that mean? Someone immediately asks.

Well, it means, in the first place, to give your heart to God. Through His servant, the wise man of old, the Lord says: "My son, give Me thine heart." The center of our being is what is meant by this figurative expression, the heart. If we give God our hearts, we thereby give him the control of our minds that we may think in harmony with the truth; we give Him the control of our affections that we may love what He loves and hate what He hates; we give Him the control of our wills that we may do in accordance with His purposes. If we give God our hearts, we thereby give Him our ears that we may listen to worthy things and not to unclean things; we give Him our eyes that we may see the beauty and the wonder of His creation and not look upon the things that will besmire our souls; we give Him our lips that we may speak His praise and communicate worth while ideas and not pollute them with profanity or smut; we give Him our feet that we may walk in the paths of rectitude and not tread the way that leads to destruction; we give Him our hands that we may work for Him and our fellow men and not do the works of darkness; in short, by giving God our hearts we give Him our bodies, minds and souls-our everything-to be controlled and used by Him to the glory of His great name. God wants this; He wants the control of the center of our being; for thus, and thus only, can our lives attain to that purpose for which He created them. Only thus can we attain to true success. Every other kind of life, no matter what success it may appear to have before the eyes of men, is a dismal failure in the judgement of God. And after all, God's evaluation is the only thing that really and permanently counts.

But, someone asks, do not the hearts of baptized children and young people already belong to God? Yes, by baptism a child become a child of God, and his heart belongs to God by the miracle of new birth. But as the child grows up,

he faces the problem of choice as to whether he will remain a child of God or stray away from Him. If he chooses, by the grace of God, to remain faithful to his baptismal covenant, he consciously and of his own accord gives God his heart by accepting Jesus Christ as his personal Savior from sin and death and by making Him the Captain of his life. In other words, by the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit, he makes a decision to give God the control of the center of his being.

"Every person should look upon his life as a holy thing, as an exalted possession . . ."

If a baptized child has strayed away from God and broken his baptismal covenant, he faces, of course, the necessity of giving his heart back to God in a genuine conversion. When the Holy Spirit calls such a one through the Word, convicts him of sin, and points him to Jesus Christ as his Savior, the Spirit gives also the power to believe and to be saved. When the repentant prodigal does not resist this call and invitation, but yields to it and accepts Christ as his personal Savior and King, he thereby gives his heart back to God - he gives God again the control of the center of his being.

In either case-whether a person has remained in his baptismal covenant or has been converted from a life in sin-he faces the problem of an increasing consecration to God and His will. There are many Christian young people who seem to give God only a part of their hearts; they dedicate only sections of their lives to Him. They want to be Christians, but they also want to share in the life of the world. They have difficulty in keeping away from sinful amusements. They have struggles with



LIFE . . .

intellectual doubts, with sinful desires and with selfish wills. They are not wholly and absolutely surrendered to God.

God is not satisfied with such half-hearted devotion and service. He says "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind" (Luke 10:27). Here is set up an ideal that will keep us busy all the days of our life, and even then we shall not perfectly attain to it. But it should stand before us constantly as a standard by which to measure the completeness of our consecration, and it should be our purpose as enterprising and forward looking Christians to strive by the help of God for a more and more complete giving of our hearts to Him.

God has a right to such consecration of our lives. He has created us and sustained us; He has redeemed us by the price of His Son's blood; He has provided all things for our spiritual and temporal well being; He has planned for us an eternal destiny in Glory. Surely in a spirit of gratitude we should place our lives in His hands to spend in His service.

Give your heart to God in complete devotion - this is our first answer to the question, "What shall I do with my life?"

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

Next time: Has God a Plan for My Life?

DAHLE . . .

His funeral service was held in Bethany Fellowship Chapel, Minneapolis, on Thurs., Sept. 16, and interment was in Sunset Memorial Park, Minneapolis.

In addition to his brother Trygve, he is survived by nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Blessed be his memory.

(Ed. note: Some of our readers will remember that Pastor Dahle was at our annual conference in 1981 in Minneapolis and, of course, he was out at Medicine Lake at other times as well.)

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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paid at Minneapolis, Minn.

FROM ALL THAT DWELL BELOW THE SKIES

From all that dwell below the skies
Let the Creator's praise arise:
Let the Redeemer's name be sung,
Thro' ev'ry land by ev'ry tongue.

Eternal are Thy mercies, Lord!
Eternal truth attends Thy Word;
Thy praise shall sound from shore to
shore,
Till suns shall rise and set no more.

Isaac Watts

THE PROPOSED MERGER

It came as no surprise that three Lutheran church bodies voted to continue to move toward merger, perhaps as early as 1988, at their conventions last month. We refer to the action taken by the American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. The latter group is made up of congregations which left the Lutheran Missouri Synod a few years ago, feeling that it had grown too conservative theologically.

There was some surprise that the vote in favor by the ALC was as large as it was, 91 per cent. There had been speculation that the vote would fall short of the two-thirds majority needed. Shortly before the San Diego convention the existence of an opposition group, the Committee for Lutheran Cooperation, became public knowledge. But it was apparently a case of too little and too late to stop a movement toward merger which only an act of God can halt now and we don't know what that would be.

How a few troublesome questions

are decided will determine whether *all* pastors and congregations, especially in the ALC, will enter the eventual Lutheran super-church. We refer to the statement on Scripture, what the Bible really is and what can be expected of it (rumor has it that the new church will try to say as little as possible about it); who will own the local churches; and the ecumenical commitments of the new church. The ALC and the much younger AELC have never joined the National Council of Churches, for instance.

Opponents of merger in the ALC contended that issues such as these should have been decided before making a further commitment to merger. But in this merger the promise is made first, then the hard issues are to be ironed out by a 70-member Commission for a New Lutheran Church. They will be ironed out to the satisfaction of the majority of the people. The only suspense will be seeing what those who cannot enter the merger for conscience's sake do.