

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

October 28, 1980



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AT THE MASTER'S FEET

Pastor Ralph M. Rokke



Goodness: Being Like God

There is a story about a man who had a horse. He had only one horse and one day it broke out of its corral and ran off into the hills. The man's neighbors came to sympathize. "Too bad!" they said. "What bad luck!"

"How do you know that?" the man responded. The next night the horse came back to the corral, and it brought with it twelve wild stallions.

"My, what good luck!" his neighbors said. Again the man asked, "How do you know that?"

Later the man's son was trying to break one of the wild stallions and he was thrown by the horse and broke his leg. "What bad luck!" the neighbors said. "How do you know that?" the man responded once again.

This little story illustrates a problem about the way that we often use the words "good" and "bad." The problem

is that we often use them only to describe objects, people or events that please us or displease us. We call a rainy day "good" if we want water for our crops or gardens and we call the same kind of day "bad" if we were planning on going fishing. Yet using the words in this way makes them almost meaningless because so often something that we at first call "bad" is soon shown to have been a real blessing in disguise.

The Bible tells us in Galatians 5:22 that a part of the fruit of the Spirit is *goodness*. Now what does that mean? Does it mean just whatever pleases us? No! As we have seen, we need a better definition of goodness than that. What then does it mean?

The answer is that goodness is not that which pleases us, but it is that which pleases God. God is telling us in Galatians 5:22 that he wants the lives of His children to be filled with that which pleases Him.

God wants "goodness" in the lives of His children. That means that He wants what pleases Him in the lives of His children, and the thing that pleases God in His children above all else is likeness to Himself.

God is merciful and forgiving. He wants us to be forgiving, too. Jesus taught us to pray in the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." The more that we experience God's forgiveness in our lives, the more we should be willing to forgive others.

God is compassionate. He provides food, clothing, homes, air to breathe, and every blessing of this world not only for His own children, but also for

the ungodly who scorn Him as well.

Sometimes we hear men accuse and even curse God because there is hunger and starvation in the world. Do these same people also thank God that most of the world's people do have food? No! Yet no one would have any food if it were not for the compassion of God.

Our God can enter into the sufferings and hardships of His creatures. In fact, He has in the person of His son, Jesus Christ. It is His desire to satisfy the needs of His creatures. That is what compassion means, and being filled with goodness means that we, too, are compassionate in that way.

Then, too, our God is holy. He does not enjoy sin. In fact, He cannot stand it. He must reject it. He can only accept what is true, honorable and right. If we are going to be filled with goodness as a part of the fruit of the Spirit, we, too, must have no taste for what is evil but rather love and choose what is holy and pure.

Sometimes the simplest words are the hardest to explain. They are so elemental that we use them to explain other words, but they themselves are hard to explain. Goodness is that kind of word. It is the word for something so close to God that we must use God himself to explain it. Goodness is God-likeness.

If you are trusting in Jesus as your Savior, if you will read your Bible and pray, spend time with God and get to know what pleases Him, then you will become like Him. Then you, too, by the working of the Holy Spirit, will know goodness in your life. May God grant this in your life and mine. Amen.

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Bible reading must be a daily habit

by Pastor Wm. Moberg,
Ortley, S. Dak.

Is the Bible a joy for you to read? I am afraid that many of our readers if they answer truthfully, would have to reply, "No, I just do not find the Bible enjoyable to read."

For the key to finding out how the Bible can be enjoyable for us to read, we need, perhaps, to get the answer from those who really enjoy reading and studying the Bible. I remember my father, in particular, who spent several hours a day reading from his Bible. He had taken a pledge as a boy of 12 to read the Bible every day. As far as I know, he never broke that pledge. As he continued to read the Bible, instead of reading the minimum, he kept reading more and more. His formula was to read at least one chapter from

the Old Testament, one chapter from the New Testament, one chapter from the Book of Proverbs according to the day of the month, and one of the Psalms according to the day of the month.

One pastor I know recommends reading a good book on the particular chapters you are reading—a little bit each day along with the Bible reading. These might be books of history, archaeology or commentaries. A person does not have to own these books, but may borrow them from a library, or the pastor, if he will allow his "tools" to go out of his study. It would be a good idea to recommend the purchase of such books for the church library. So many of our church libraries are sadly lacking in Bible reading helps and are filled instead with the easy reading, "How to be a Happy Christian Instantaneously" books.

If you have never read the Bible completely through in one year, you have a really wonderful experience awaiting you. There are many Bible-reading calendars available to guide a reader day-by-day through the Bible in one year. One such calendar is available free of charge from Back to the Bible Broadcast, Lincoln, Nebraska. Another good calendar is found in Halley's Bible Handbook. (Pastors, you may want to duplicate the calendar and give it out to your congregation.)

For myself, the greatest enjoyment in Bible reading and in Bible study is working with the original languages. This is not for everyone, but when the original languages speak for themselves, many meanings come out in the original writing that is really thrilling and worth all of the extra effort involved.

One of the most enjoyable ways to study the Bible is to put whole chapters and books of the Bible on tape. Then as you go about doing your housework, or hobby, play back the chapter you have recorded. You will be surprised how easy and enjoyable it is to study God's Word in this manner. The hard part is getting the material on tape in the first place. You will discover that it is not easy to get a portion of Scripture word-for-word correct. Don't let that discourage you. Do just a few chapters at a time and keep adding to them. It gets easier with practice. Of course tapes may be purchased pre-recorded, but you are missing half of the enjoyment and learning if you do not do the tapes yourself. You can share these tapes with shut-ins and with those who are sick and add the personal testimony of your own voice!

Reading and studying God's own word is enjoyable, as God intended His Holy Word to be the guide to our path and the light to our feet.

HOW TO ENJOY THE BIBLE



WHAT A WONDERFUL GOD!

He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (Rom. 8:32).

Congratulations! I consider it a real privilege and a great joy to come here today and bring you a greeting and message from God's Word on your 77th anniversary celebration. The verse that I just read from Romans 8 is one of my great favorites.

This verse begins with *He*. Who is the "He" Paul is speaking about here? He is speaking about God, the creator of heaven and earth. He is telling us in a few crystal clear words:

1. How He is.
2. What He has done.
3. What He will do.

He is full of love and compassion for all and because of that what did he do? He did not spare his own Son but delivered him up for us all. He suffered and died on the cross of Calvary for our sins and took them all away by the sacrifice of Himself. Whom did He do that for? For us all. For every one. For you.

What a drawing, saving power there is in the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. We have experienced again and again that it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth in our little church.

How well I remember Hensley who used to live out by Junction City. He came here every Sunday morning rain or shine. And one day he told me a

flash of light from this glorious Gospel did shine into his darkened understanding and he saw himself saved through what Jesus had done for him. Faith came by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Then he became so concerned about his brother Henry. Even when he lived in Springfield, he went there to pick him up and brought him to church. And soon Henry had the same experience. I never forget how he told me as tears of joy trickled down his face how wonderful it was when he discovered through the Word that he had everything he needed in Jesus Christ. And the third brother, Martin Hanson, was often in a dark tunnel, but he came out into the clear sunshine of God's forgiving grace and now they are all three in glory, saved forever. Glory be to God!

How precious and valuable this little church was to these three brothers and how valuable the Spencer Creek Lutheran Church is for God when we think that one soul is worth more than the whole world. A little church like this where sinners are saved is much more valuable in the sight of God than

"What a drawing, saving power there is in the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ."

BIBLE . . .

Even more enjoyable is memorizing God's Word. The best thing any of us can do for good mental health is to memorize God's word and to "hide it in our hearts." That portion we have memorized is truly ours and we become experts on the portion of Scripture. If we could just get our people to memorize Scripture, we would be amazed at the mental and spiritual growth of our people. Once in a while we see someone who takes up the challenge of memorizing Scripture. Those,

it seems, are able to do things others are not capable of. One of those persons was Fanny Crosby, the blind woman, who wrote so many of our favorite hymns. She was able to write hundreds of beautiful hymns because of her knowledge of Scripture.

The Bible is not a book that we can enjoy by casual skimming. Bible reading, to be a real joy, must become a daily habit. We need to develop "holy habits." We know, too, that the Holy Spirit must be our guide and reveal Scripture to us, or the Bible will seem as foolishness to us. We must therefore approach Bible reading in a prayerful

and reverent attitude. We cannot live like the devil and enjoy God's Holy Book.

But if we approach God's Holy Book reverently, it will speak to us in many ways. We will understand God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son. We will understand our own human weaknesses and we will understand the whole scope of human history through a careful reading of the Scripture. We will also see God's direction for our life and we will see the hope of eternal life. Because the Author is Divine, there is no book like the Book of Books, the Bible.

We cannot live like the devil and enjoy God's Holy Book."

a great big cathedral worth millions of dollars where no souls are saved. I could mention ever so many more who have been saved here, but I will not take time to do that now.

Let me continue to tell you about the good news, the wonderful things God has done to save us from sin, death and the power of the devil.

I had a letter from a dear old preacher friend of mine. He said among other things that Satan pestered him at night when he couldn't sleep. I wrote back to him and said he could consider himself very fortunate to be bothered only at night. He is after me both day and night. Jesus said to Simon: "Simon, Simon, Satan desired to have you, but I prayed for you." What a blessing to have such a faithful intercessor, and then He has given us mighty weapons, His almighty word. "It is written"; that can put Satan on the run any time. For instance, words like Rom. 8:1: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," and Eph. 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Did you notice what it says? Not according to our measurement of weaker or stronger faith, but according to the riches of His grace. Who can measure how rich He is in His grace? He will abundantly forgive and pardeon.

And when we received his forgiving, saving grace we were transferred from the first Adam with sin, condemnation and death into the last Adam, Jesus Christ, where there is no condemnation.

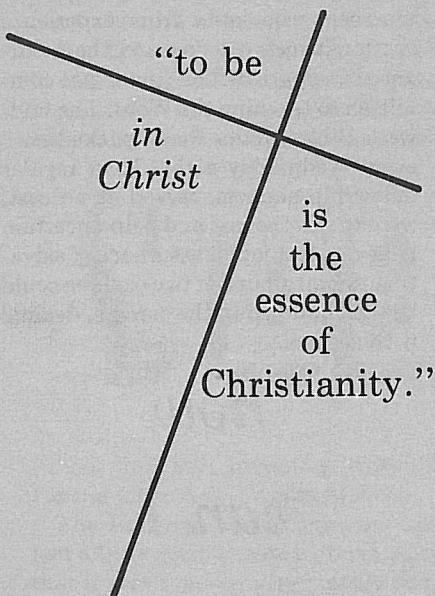
What a wonderful place to live! And we did not only get a new place to live, but we got a new life. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (II Cor. 5:17). How the apostle Paul emphasizes this truth of being in Christ over and over in his epistles. He uses "in Christ" 34 times, "in Christ Jesus" 48 times, and "in the Lord" 50 times. To be *in Christ* is the essence of Christianity. A bird lives in the air, a fish in the water, a root of a tree in the soil, and every true Christian in Christ.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ."

Now is present tense, meaning always. Now no condemnation. What precious words!

How can it be possible that there is no condemnation for them which are in Christ Jesus? Paul gives the answer in Rom. 5:12 and 18: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned . . . by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation."

Now listen, as our federal head (the first Adam) took the whole human race with him into sin, condemnation and death, so did our substitute, our new



federal head (the last Adam), Jesus Christ, when He was lifted up on the cross (Jn. 12:32-33) take the whole human race with him. Christ said: "Now is the judgment of this world." The time had now come when the whole human race should be condemned to death for its sins in its substitute. It is in the light of this great judgment day that Paul says, in II Cor. 5:14-15: "Because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again."

This is the way God reckons, this is the way He judges. Do you agree with Him? By faith in this glorious message of redemption you become partaker of this new life in Christ.

And listen to this: Just as surely as God loved you so much that He spared not His own Son but delivered Him for us all to suffer and die for our sins, just as surely will He give you all things with Him, after you have accepted Him as your Savior. When you are a child of God you are also heirs, co-heirs together with Christ. Peter gives us a little glimpse of some of these riches (I Pet. 1:3): "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." All these unsearchable riches of Christ with him.

My dear unsaved friends here this morning, are you going to miss out on all this? What have you done up to this time? You have refused to receive the unspeakable gift of God. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? (Heb. 2:3).

I invite you to stay after the service this morning. We will kneel and pray at the altar here, and if you come repenting of your sin you will find that He is faithful and just to forgive, and to cleanse from all unrighteousness (1 Jn. 1:9).

If you continue to put it off and you go eternally lost I am pure from the blood of you all, for I have declared to you the truth from God. I have pleaded with you to come today. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation (II Cor. 6:2).



by Pastor Lars
Stalsbrotten,
Woodburn, Ore.

This sermon was delivered at the 77th anniversary celebration of Spencer Creek Lutheran Church, Eugene, Oregon, September 21, 1980. Submitted by Mrs. Esther Stalsbrotten.

Soul-winning is wise

by Pastor F.E. Olderr (S. T. D.)

The Bible says: "He that winneth souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30) and, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3).

Our risen Lord Jesus gave us His program in Matthew 28 and Mark 16. Here He clearly tells us that we should go into the whole world with the message. The message centers around the forgiveness of sins and salvation. There is no salvation and assurance of forgiveness unless there has been confession. The definite act of confession requires the aid of another person. Here enters the Christian who has experienced the grace of God and knows the way of salvation.

The early Christian Church understood this. We see it in the experience of Philip dealing with the Ethiopian eunuch, in Acts 8. The eunuch could not understand the Scriptures. Philip drew near and asked if he understood. He replied: "How can I, except some man should guide me?" (v. 31). From the Scriptures Philip showed him the Savior. He confessed his sin and received Jesus. Philip had led him to the assurance of salvation. The eunuch went on his way rejoicing (v. 39).

In our modern church, things have been different for too long. We have been more concerned with our programs than with the Program of the Great Commission. In this year when we celebrate the 400th anniversary of the *Book of Concord*, let us "contend for the faith delivered to the saints." This faith of our beloved Church and the faith of the Reformer, Martin Luther, centers around the assurance of salvation. Concerned Christians have been asking, "How can I lead a soul to the assurance of salvation?"

Some years ago, in Chicago, Ill., there was in our neighborhood a church which had an ongoing revival, Messiah Lutheran Church, Rev. T. L. Rydbeck its pastor. In that congregation were members who knew from experience the forgiveness of sins and the assurance of salvation. The pastor was committed to teaching the Word. The mid-week Bible studies were "packed out" every Wednesday night. Their regular fellowship suppers, served at no cost, were to win the lost and help uncertain believers to a joyful assurance of salvation. Small groups of two or three could be seen huddled in the corners, dealing with seekers.

*'how
can I
lead
a soul
to the
assurance
of
salvation?'*

As the Lord led me into that fellowship I discovered the Christian workers' class which Pastor Rydbeck directed. Out of this group went trained workers equipped with a knowledge of the Word, dedicated to a simple, single purpose of knowing enough of the Scriptures to lead seekers to a joyful assurance of salvation. We learned a simple outline using about a dozen verses. Over the years since, I have used this simple outline in my ministry to seekers. The purpose of this article is to teach this same outline to our readers who are burdened for the lost around them, but are themselves at a loss as to how to do it. Let us begin our lesson.

outline for seekers . . .

Responses of the seeker will be in italics. To the initial question: "Do you have the assurance of the forgiveness of your sins?" can come one of three answers: "Yes," "I hope so" or "No." If the person answers: "Yes," continue. "Fine"! ("Great"!)" I wonder if you had the same experience I had. How do you know that your sins are forgiven?" "I feel like it!" I John 5:13 says, "...that you may know that you have eternal life." (We need to have the Bible in hand, even though we know these verses perfectly. The seeker needs to see and to read the words directly from the pages of the Bible.) Continuing - "Sometimes we feel high and sometimes we feel low, does that affect your salvation or God's relationship with you?" "No, I guess not." (From here we go to the I John 1:9 passage.)

But suppose the answer is, "I hope so." We then ask, "Suppose I asked a married person, 'Are you married?'

a Page for CHILDREN

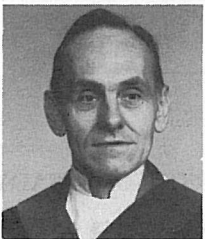
James Calvert

The Printer Missionary to Fiji (1838-1855)

and he/she replied, "Well, I hope so?" "It is very evident that you are not so sure about it?" "Yes." "But I know one thing that you are sure about - yes, I know you are sure about your sin." "Yes, that's right". "You have tried to conquer it and have made resolutions, but you can't win. I read in my Bible, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots, then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil' (Jer. 13:23). Are you confessing this sin? Are you willing to? Now?" (Get them down on their knees.) Then go on to the I John 1:9 passage.

The person may give the third reply, "No." From this we can go directly to the I John 1:9 passage, as we ask: "Do you want to have this assurance?" The expected answer is "Yes." Then we begin dealing right then. If the answer is in the negative and he is unyielding, there is nothing that can be done at this point. It is futile to "preach at" him/her. Let the person go. But he is not necessarily lost forever. The Holy Spirit may work in his heart such unrest that the time will come when you will deal with him.

(To be continued)



Dr. Olderr, a graduate of Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minn., is pastor of the Naples, S. Dak., ALC parish and lives in Watertown, S. Dak.

There seems to be no profession or trade that a missionary may not find useful in both home and foreign fields. Now this one, James Calvert, who was born in England (167) years ago, was apprenticed to a printer, bookbinder, and stationer, for seven years. He had some education first, and seems to have made good use of all his early opportunities.

The young man's heart turned to the foreign mission work, and in good time he was appointed to labor in Fiji, and went bravely to the field to which the Wesleyan Missionary Society sent him. It took three months' travel to reach the island, in 1838. One of the first tasks that came to the heroic missionary was to gather up and bury the bones of 80 victims of a cannibal feast. You see what he had to deal with in his new field, and what the young bride had to face. But they had no thought of turning back—not they.

Six months after landing in Fiji, Mr. Calvert had charge of 13 towns that had no roads at all connecting them, and of 24 surrounding islands, some of them a hundred miles away. To reach his island-field, the missionary had only a canoe that was hardly seaworthy, but he used it somehow, and was kept from drowning, and from being killed and eaten by the savages. He and his wife mastered the queer language very soon, and showed very great courage and tact in dealing with the natives.

The name of the king was Thakombau. The conversion of his daughter had a great influence upon the savages. There was a custom in the islands of strangling the women of the household when a king died. Mr. Calvert offered, Fiji fashion, to have one of his own fingers cut off if Thakombau would promise not to strangle any women when the

old king died. Just this offer showed the cannibals what sort of stuff the man was made of. He did a great deal to abolish the dreadful custom.

When, by and by, the king of the Cannibal Islands became a Christian, he ordered what had been the old "death drums" be used thereafter in calling people together to worship the true God, in whom he now believed. He openly confessed his faith and put away his many wives. Among his last acts was the ceding of Fiji to the Queen of Great Britain.

Mr. Calvert's knowledge of printing and bookbinding was very useful indeed, as was the printing-press set up not long after his arrival. The press was carried from one island to another, and thousands and thousands of printed pages were scattered abroad. In 1847 the New Testament, well bound and complete, was ready for the natives.

After 17 years of labor in Fiji, the missionary spent some time in England, then went on a mission to Africa. In 1855 he attended the Jubilee of Christianity in Fiji. He found over 1,300 churches, ten white missionaries, 65 native ones, 1,000 head teachers, 30,000 church-members, and 104,585 church attendants. He died in 1892.

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

Our Memory Verse

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace, who brings good tidings of good, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns' " (Isaiah 52:7).

Missionary Heroes



St. Paulites learning about Victory in Christ

Victory in Christ Lutheran Church is located in Maplewood, a suburb of St. Paul, Minn., and a city of 25,000 people. However, people come to our congregation from St. Paul proper as well as from other neighboring suburbs, including Little Canada, White Bear Lake, North St. Paul, Vadnais Heights, Oakdale and Roseville. We have been in our new church building, built with the help of a Church Extension loan, since 1978.

The congregation was organized in 1974. It first met in the Bergstrom home, the Sweden House Restaurant and then the Roosevelt Community Center. Pastors who have served the congregation are Francis Monseth, Ralph Rokke, Elden Nelson, Gary Skramstad and now I, James Gerdeen.



I started here as interim pastor in October, 1979, before accepting a full-time call.

As the Word of God has been faithfully proclaimed, the attendance at Sunday morning worship has increased from an average of 60 in October, 1979, to 75 in June, 1980, and to 90 in September, 1980. We currently have about 60 attending Sunday School and we are working to increase that. We also conduct a separate neighborhood Sunday School in the Roosevelt Center. From 35 to 50 people are usually present in our Wednesday night Bible study and prayer hour. This is very encouraging. People who are hungry for God's Word will be satisfied, grow and bear fruit. We have a good number of youth who are now meeting regularly for choir practice and Bible study. A student volunteer from AFLBS, Mark Westlake, is now working with the youth group. In confirmation classes we have eight students enrolled.

Some of our men have met on Saturday mornings for breakfast and Bible study. This has been an effective means of outreach and involvement of men who do not come on Wednesday nights. We are now trying alternate noon lunches and breakfasts to attempt to involve other men who work 3-11 p.m., or later shifts. We have an active WMF group for the ladies. The ladies have also begun a biweekly Thursday night book study as a means of sharing and personal growth. Our church members also conduct monthly services at the Union Gospel Mission and at two different apartment buildings for the elderly. As you can see, we have a very active membership even

though we are a small congregation.

We hope soon to begin regular weekly on-the-job training in personal evangelism. We believe in "Victory in Christ" and we need to learn how to better share that victory with others. One thing about evangelism has struck me, however, that I am becoming more and more aware of. A church that expects to have an effective outreach must also at the same time be prepared for a heavy counseling load. We reach people in need. "Only the sick need a physician." We reach people who have marriage problems, alcohol problems, etc., because they have not previously known victory in Christ. As we reach such needy people and lead them to Christ, then there is yet a great work to be done in helping them with the problems and the consequences of the past life. We need churches that really care about people, as Pastor Snipstead said at the installation service here on September 21, using as a text I John 7-12. Pastors today, too, need to do more and more counseling as we face a society that is crumbling at its foundations.

Your gifts to Home Missions and your gifts and loans to Church Extension are being used to reach real people who are hurting and to lead them to Christ. You are laying up treasure in heaven. You are extending the compassion of Christ. Keep it up! I thank you on behalf of those needy souls.

Pastor James C. Gerdeen



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editorials

DISMAL READING

The drinking habits of the three major candidates for U. S. president this year, all of whom claim to be "born again," made for dismal reading when the subject was covered recently in *U. S. News and World Report* (Oct. 6). The information was contained as part of a disclosure about the health of the three men, one of whom will have been elected by the time all of you have read this.

One man drinks a martini now and then, but stays away from beer because he is allergic to hops. Another confines himself to two ounces of alcohol each day, preferring beer or hard liquor and does not care for wine. The third man "drinks in moderation," having a preference for "an occasional vodka" and orange juice or a glass of wine.

It is sad that in the first election in U. S. history where three major candidates claim personal relationship to Jesus Christ that all three come down on the side of social drinking, albeit in moderation. What an unfortunate witness and example.

The term "born again" is one which needs some discussion. In Lutheran theology it refers primarily to new birth in infant baptism. The term comes from John 3, the visit of Nicodemus to Jesus. Note the words of Jesus: "Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (v. 3) and "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (v. 5, KJV).

All theologies which practise infant baptism see the new birth as taking place then. A subsequent falling away from relationship to the Lord (when that takes place) requires a

conversion or turning again to Him, that which Dr. Ole Hallesby called a rising from spiritual death, although we all understand what people mean when they use the term "born again" to describe a coming to the Lord for salvation.

And if one has been raised under Baptistic theology or under no theology at all and comes to know the Lord Jesus as Savior, then it is correct to speak of such a one as having been "born again" in the water baptism which follows.

We anticipate some objection to terms and we cannot say everything there is to be said about this or touch every theological base, but suffice it to say now that to be truly converted or "born again" means that one has turned from spiritual darkness to light. Being now *in Christ*, "he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (II Cor. 5:17). The old lifestyle is done away and a new lifestyle emerges. Risen with Christ (Col. 3:1), as he surely is in his conversion, the new believer turns his attention to heavenly things, earnestly endeavoring not to become earth-bound while all the time living his life in this world. There is a new affection and each day should see a growing Christ-likeness, which is the sanctification or holiness without which no one will see the Lord (Heb. 12:14).

Therefore it is sad and tragic that these men who would lead our nation, wanting to be known as men who have turned from lives of evil to lives under the direction of the Spirit of God, have not laid aside the use of alcohol in their lives, for alcohol has left a trail of human wreckage and ought to have no endorsement from those who bear the name of Jesus Christ.

The term "born again" has lost much of its meaning and significance in these latter days. Once the indicator of holy, separated living, it can now be associated also with crude speech (also among presidential candidates) and general carelessness in conduct. To say one is "born again" doesn't mean all that much nowadays. The proof comes out in godly and holy living.

ASSOCIATION OF FREE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS

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Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

BUDGET RECEIPTS

Feb. 1 - Sept. 30

Total Budget	Date	Received to Total (Ideal 67%)	% of
General Fund	\$104,140.00	\$49,313.20	47%
Schools	179,802.00	77,560.75	43
Home Missions	105,252.00	37,516.15	36
World Missions	156,636.00	66,284.57	42
Praise	36,407.00	13,762.73	38
TOTAL	\$582,237.00	\$244,437.40	42%
1979-80	\$481,635.00	\$210,081.80	44%

THE WOMEN'S PAGE

Practicing the ministry of hospitality

We all have been in a new situation and felt cool apprehension melt with warm fellowship in the home of hospitable people. The kind but brief greetings to the one who sits in front of us at church Sunday after Sunday suddenly become encouraging conversations after sharing a home-cooked meal together. Hospitality indeed is a ministry of service to the Lord that all can do, whether we live alone or in a bustling household.

1 Peter 4:9: "Use hospitality one to another without grudging."

"The people across the street have lived here longer than we have. They should invite us first." "I really have to get my own work done." Or, "My own family is just too demanding now. I must take care of them and my own problems first." The list of excuses can go on and on. I have used many of them myself. I have even been reprimanded by my own children saying, "If we who are Christians don't befriend people and show them the love of Jesus, who will?" As I realize this truth I proceed to make my apple pie for the next door neighbor, but not with an, "Well, I guess I have to" attitude. The blessings received far outweigh the effort that has been put forth as we start to practice the gift of hospitality.

As you prepare a meal for company, it can involve a happy family atmosphere of doing things together; mother

and daughter (or sons) working together in the kitchen. It also makes for a happy husband. How he enjoys all that good food that we don't ordinarily have (though it does make him a bit larger)!

It's important to be organized because it can become difficult and frustrating if we are suddenly faced with unexpected guests at the door. I am sure you have experienced this and begun immediately to ask, "Whatever am I going to serve them for lunch?" With just a little preplanning and a small amount of work you can have a reserve meal in the freezer ready to pop in the oven at a moment's notice. This will enable you to enjoy and visit with your guests. However, you may need to padlock the freezer and hide the key to keep your hungry teenagers out of the goodies. One warning here: disaster may set in if you forget where you hid the key!

"... blessings received far outweigh the effort ..."

The Lord will give grace even in the worst situations. If you have to begin from scratch just invite your guests in the kitchen, give them a comfortable chair and pray you have enough food in your cupboards to prepare a simple meal. It's amazing what you will be able to come up with!

It's sometimes difficult for a mother and wife to get all her tasks done and true it is that a woman's work is never done! But, "... Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not"—(Gal. 6:9).

As we begin to invite guests home for dinner, it can easily become a habit to invite only our good friends or those we know will invite us back, or those we enjoy fellowship with, but the world is hurting. There are so many people who need to be shown the love of Jesus. "Then he turned to his host, 'When you put on a dinner,' he said, 'Don't invite friends, brothers, relatives and rich neighbors! For they will return the invitation. Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind'" (Luke 14:12-13).

It can be a great blessing to entertain strangers for as we begin to practice the gift of hospitality the Lord will open up new opportunities to exercise this gift. As you look forward to this, remember Hebrews 13:2: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

God abundantly blesses each of us as we joyfully serve Him in loving hospitality to those in our congregations and communities.

by Mrs. Roger Krueger
Granite Falls, Minn.



Honorary Membership pins recently given . . .

Drummond, Wis.



Mrs. Gordon Sorenson has been Ladies Aid treasurer for 18 years and WMF treasurer for 10 years.

Funds from HONORARY MEMBERSHIP and IN MEMORIAMs are sent to national workers in India and Mexico.

Valley City, N. Dak.

Mrs. Melvin Kvilvang and Mrs. Steela Haarsager recently received pins from Grace WMF.



Wallace, S. Dak.

Mrs. Lorraine Wasland and Mrs. Janet Jackson were honored at Calvary. The late Miss Anna Sakariason and Mrs. Mena Johnson were also given tribute.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR Women's Page is edited by Miss Solveig Larson. Send all news items, suggestions, etc. to 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Mpls., 55441.

FLY team '80

Brazil is people

Somehow I don't think a trip like this can be written about. It must be experienced to be understood. Nevertheless, I will attempt to write about it—to give you a few highlights into FLY (Free Lutheran Youth) team '80 to Brazil. Mine is not a story of events or places, but of people, of watching God work in and through people, of coming to know and love those people, and of seeing my own faith grow because of those people.

Five of us travelled to Brazil in June, but, strictly speaking, the FLY Team consisted of two people: Lavonne Torkelson, Wanamingo, Minn., and I. Jonathan Abel was our guide, and his two sisters, Lydia and Priscilla, also accompanied the group. The Lord packed so many experiences into a six-week trip that I couldn't possibly share them all with you, though I would love to. But hopefully I can share a few experiences with you that will give you a true picture of life in Brazil and a clear picture of the AFLC in Brazil.

By far the best week of our trip was spent at Bible Camp. Each winter the AFLC has a youth camp (ages 13-30) at our camp located about ten kilometers from Campo Mourao. The reason this was our best week was that we lived right with the Brazilians and had a good chance to get to know many of them as friends. We found camp to be very well organized with lots of activities and no time for boredom. (Not much time for sleep, either!) All the campers were divided into two teams, by which we competed throughout the week in such things as sports, dorm clean-up, and Bible memorization. I found this to be a way of promoting unity as the teams encouraged one another to work together and develop friendships.

I'd like you to meet some of the friends I made this summer—people

whom you can't help loving and appreciating. Meet Edilson Dabellos, a long-time member of Central Church in Campo Mourão. He is one of the leaders of the youth group and has been very faithful, in spite of the fact that his parents have shown no response to the Gospel. And meet Annette Stockhammer from Rio de Janeiro. Camp was very special for Annette as she was one of the ten or 12 people who began new life in Christ that week. I remember her remarking that that was the best day of her life. I also remember her telling me that she could speak English and that if I ever needed someone, she was there. That was encouraging to hear! I also want you to meet Nilson Gomes. Nilson is only a year old in the Lord, but is very excited about his faith and is anxious to let the Lord use him. He is attending our Bible

about the Brazilian work, and they certainly encouraged us by their love for us and their excitement in the Lord.

I must tell you about one very special weekend toward the end of our stay in Brazil. Lavonne and I had the opportunity of visiting our church in

“... they encouraged us by their love for us and their excitement in the Lord.”

Alvorada. We left Campo Mourão on Saturday morning, along with Pastor Connely Dyrud (or Pastor Joel, as he is known) and Sebastião Carvalho, a seminary student who would be left

YOUTH

School and also helps out with Lar Paraná Church in Campo Mourão.

The Brazilian way of life may take just a little getting used to, but I found that it grows on one very quickly and I soon felt quite at home. Rice and beans became a familiar sight, served once or twice a day in most Brazilian homes. And *cafezinho* has become a tradition: a very strong, very sweet version of our coffee. And you don't see many big cars—with gas at \$3 a gallon, it's very impractical, and Brazilian manufacturers don't make them. I learned to appreciate Sundays, which were more relaxed than ours tend to be. We had Sunday School in the mornings, and worship in the evenings, so the day wasn't nearly as rushed. The young people especially would often spend the afternoons canvassing the neighborhood and inviting people to church. We were often given opportunities to speak in the churches, sometimes through a translator, and sometimes in our faltering Portuguese. I found our ministry to be one of mutual encouragement: we encouraged them by our presence and desire to know more

along the way, in Iretama, to have services there. Also with us was Zeli Veiera, a Bible School graduate who is from Alvorada. Lavonne and I had the privilege of staying with her family on Saturday night and were given a very warm welcome in spite of our communication barrier. This was a special weekend for the church in Alvorada. They have no full-time pastor and Pastor Joel can only get out there once every two months. They have some very capable lay leaders who can teach and preach, but they need a regular pastor. Pray for them, won't you?

Our trip home from Alvorada was one I won't forget for a while. We left after church on Sunday evening and stopped in Iretama to get Sebastião. Then we continued on our way. We were all getting tired, but the going was good, until we hit a sharp rock which punctured one of our tires. The road is very bad, so this was nothing new, until we found out that we didn't have a jack. Or rather, we had a hydraulic jack, but no oil. It was 11:30 at night and our chances of meeting someone were pretty slim. But the

God, please

I love you, Lord.
I love Your nature,
I love the people You've made. . .
sometimes.

Jesus, I need Your love,
So I can love my friends. . .
and enemies.

God, please. . .

Don't let me become indifferent
To other people's cares,
Problems,

Joys,
and growth.

Lord, help me to learn from my
mistakes.

Help me to show others Your love—
Even when I feel tired,

Helpless,
Frustrated,

Angry,
Frightened,
Ugly.

Remind me, Lord,
That with You, I can rise above
everything.

Thank You, Lord.
Amen

Marilyn Langness,
Faith, South Dakota Grade 9



Homecoming XIV at AFLBS on Oct. 10-12 brought about 200 alumni to campus. Jim Johnson, Bloomington, Minn., gained a few yards during the annual alumni-student football game.



A new roof has been installed on the boy's dorm to correct a leaking problem. It was built in 1974.

FLY to Brazil . . .

Lord provided, as He always does when we trust Him. We found an old tree trunk which, fortunately, was still pretty solid. And using a stone as a lever, four of us "hand-jacked" the car while Pastor Joel changed the tire. Then there was the matter of getting the flat fixed, since we only had that one spare and didn't dare drive the rest of the way home without another. So after all our "faith testers," we arrived home—Campo Mourão—at about 2:00 a.m. Only to find that we had just missed another exciting event. The youth group from Central had been out at the Bible Institute, waiting for Lavonne and me so they could serenade us on what would be our last night in Campo Mourão. But they had finally

given up and gone home about half an hour earlier. Oh well, it's the thought that counts!

As many people will confirm, this was only a small fraction of my experience in Brazil. But I hope you have been able to see some of the special things about our work there, as well as some needs. Brazil needs our prayers, our workers need our support and encouragement, but above all, the Gospel needs *us* as willing servants, if it is to be spread to the "uttermost parts of the earth." Prayerfully consider your place in this work.

by Rachel Mundfrom Junior, University of Arizona, Tucson

Come to the Luther League Federation **LEADERSHIP RETREAT**

*December 28-29
at the ARC
Osceola, Wis.*

for all League leaders

Life on the Edge of Town



Season's Wrap-up

We're having one of those *bonus* days today (Oct. 6). Temperature in the mid-60s, a cloudless sky and no wind. The ash and box elder trees are bare but for seeds, the oak leaves brown and the poplar leaves are all shades of green and yellow.

Blackbirds have been around in abundance. They come by the hundreds, jabbering raucously as they sit in the trees by our place. While they do damage for farmers, they also give great evidence of life in their noisy visits.

I've taken a couple walks along our river recently. On the first trip I became aware of a great deal of beaver activity. Some has occurred on my land but most of it is on Swede Johnson's. A great many trees have been felled, from tender saplings to an ash tree about four feet in circumference. Yesterday I noted that the first bites have been taken out of an elm even larger than that and about four rods from the water. This must be a tough breed of beaver because the ash gives a chain saw a good tussle and it takes many lusty swings of the axe to topple some of the trees they've gone after.

Beaver activity is not an unmixed blessing although one must marvel at their skill and industry. The first day I was over along the river I also caught a glimpse of a great blue heron. It became aware of my presence early and kept his distance, finally flying out of sight into the trees.

There are garden and yard chores yet to be done—before the snow flies. I'd like to get at some of them yet this afternoon.

The garden produced very well. All in all our total crop will be very similar to last year's in spite of the very dry beginning, most of the plants not emerging until around July 1. Our biggest loss will be in carrots. I struck upon the idea of hanging green beans in the basement to dry and that has worked out well.

New Effington

On the first Saturday in October I went back to New Effington, S. Dak., to conduct the funeral for Olaf Stageberg, age 94. He was a member of my second parish. The pastor, Arlo Eidsness, was laid up with a health problem and I was asked to conduct the service.

I wanted to be there anyway because I lived in the Stageberg home for the first seven months I was in N. E. I well remember arriving in town on an early November evening in 1958, my car pulling a rental trailer containing many of my worldly possessions. At the Stageberg's I received a warm welcome and roomed in their basement apartment until the next summer when I moved into the square, two-storey LFC parsonage on the northeast corner of town.

Mrs. (Clara) Stageberg preceded her husband in death earlier this year. I wasn't able to be at her service because of another commitment. On this October Saturday a goodly number of people gathered for the service. My text was Psalm 73:24-26 and later we said farewell to his earthly remains in the Garden of Rest cemetery north of town. That was a very new cemetery when I left 17 years ago. Now there are quite a few graves.

It was a privilege to greet many old friends at Faith Lutheran that day, people with whom I'd shared joys and sorrows. Just a heart-warming experience.

I took the Interstate home, stopping at a cafe at Hillsboro for some supper.

This and That

That was an interesting story in the *Grand Forks* (N. Dak.) *Herald* recently about the reunion of Mrs. Oben Gunderson, McCanna, N. Dak., with other family members. She had been adopted out early in life and so hers was another of those successful searches for roots. Her husband spoke at the pastors' dinner at an annual conference some years ago and is a State legislator.

When Telemarken Lutheran, Goodridge, Minn., a congregation I serve, had its 75 anniversary on Sept. 14, several pastors and wives were present. It turned out that one of them, Harold E. Peterson, Avoca, Ia., is married to a sister of our Rev. J. G. Erickson, Minneapolis, Minn. Pearl is therefore also the daughter of Evangelist and Mrs. Joseph Erickson. The anniversary was a wonderful experience; everything went so well and the day was beautiful.

—Raynard Huglen

Sincerity means that the appearance and the reality are exactly the same.

—Oswald Chambers

Boscobel, Wis.

During the week of August 11-15, Trinity Lutheran Church, Larry V. Severson, pastor, held its annual Vacation Bible School. The theme of the week was "Jesus, I Believe in You!" The material covered many of Christ's miracles, especially His resurrection. The children ended the week with a picnic and then sang during services the following Sunday.

—Beverly Laumer



Trinity Vacation Bible School

news of the churches

Cloquet, Minn.

Sunday, August 31, was Linda Moan Korhonen Day at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Cloquet, Minnesota. Linda resigned as Parish Worker at St. Paul's to accompany her husband Lyndon to Minneapolis he is attending the AFLC Seminary.

The evening program included giving thanks to Linda for her devotion to her Lord and the way she used her love of the Lord to lead and inspire young and old alike.

The Trinity parsonage was insulated this year and a new roof will be put on the church.

We have a very active WMF group who have contributed much to the upkeep of the church and missionaries. New side lights for the church were donated by Mrs. Irene Ruka. —Helen Swenson, Secretary



Expressions of love and gratitude were given by members of the various departments, groups and boards of the church. Special music by the Youth Choir, a duet by Sue Erickson and Becky Tout from the Pairs and Spares group and a solo by Tim Korhonen, Sunday School superintendent. A gift from the Board of Trustees was presented and Honorary Membership and pin from the Martha Guild.

Pastor Herbert Franz gave an inspiring message at the end of the service.

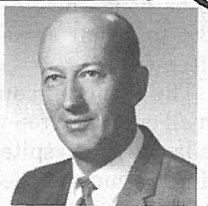
Lunch was served after the service and Linda was presented cards, letters and gifts by members and friends.

Rachel Tuura, Martha Guild



A Minister's Musings

Pastor Einar Unseth



Living for Christ

Philippians 1:21

Some years ago a psychologist conducted a survey in which thousands of people were asked what they were living for. It turned out, even to the expert's astonishment, that 19 out of 20 people didn't know what they were living for. They were just living and waiting. They were waiting for some opportunity to come along—or waiting for someone to die—or to take a trip. They were simply waiting—for something better.

Very few people know what they are living for, because they don't have any definite life purpose. Thus their only purpose in life may be work, earning money, sports, eating, travel, family or pleasure. Without a real purpose in life, we can't accomplish anything

worthwhile. And we will always be dissatisfied and restless.

Nineteen hundred years ago the apostle Paul wrote these words, in Philippians 1:21: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." It is significant to note the setting of these challenging words. Where did Paul write them? It was in Rome in a prison cell. It was after years of unparalleled toil and suffering. He had experienced beatings, imprisonment, shipwrecks and many other perils. Yet his motto was, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

It is interesting to note that the words "live" and "die" follow each other. There is but a comma between them. As one person said, "Life is but death's vestibule." If we want to learn

about the happiness of a person, we must judge him in these two closely connected things, his life and his death. Solon said, "Call no person happy till he is dead; for you know not what changes may pass upon him in life."

When Paul said, "For me to live is Christ," he meant that he had received a new life from Christ. He meant that Christ made his life meaningful. He meant that he was seeking to model his life after Christ. He meant that his aim was to glorify Christ. Therefore he could say, "To die is gain." Even though the Christian, too, loses many things when he dies, yet he gains far more than he loses. For he gains eternal riches. He gains Heaven.

Having the right purpose in life gave Paul perseverance in all his endeavors and calmness in his trials.

May God help us also to say, "For me to live is Christ."

Gleanings from Parish Papers

Kalispell, Mont.—The parking lot of *Faith Lutheran* was paved and striped this fall by Pack and Co.

The addition to *Stillwater Lutheran* was re-classified as a two-storey structure, thereby negating the code for basements which requires a sprinkler system. The high basement windows helped cause the two-story designation.

Minnewaukan, N. Dak.—Jim Hjellden, who served as an assistant in Trinity and Antiochia Churches last summer, was honored at a fellowship dinner on Sunday, August 31, before he returned to his studies at Canadian Bible College in Regina, Sask.

Winger, Minn.—Mission Sunday was observed at Union Lake Church on Sept. 7. A fellowship dinner followed the morning worship service.

Roseau, Minn.—*Rose Lutheran* had Sunday School Rally Day on Sept. 14. Part of the regular schedule for the year is an informal coffee and Bible hour for adults.

Roseau Lutheran observed Rally Day on Sept. 7. A magician took part in the program, gifts were given to all students and there was special music.

Dalton, Minn.—The Kvam Ladies Aid sponsored its annual fall bazaar on Sat., Sept. 27.

Bessemer, Mich.—The parish participated in the Upper Peninsula District first annual couples' retreat which was held at Fortune Lake Bible Camp, Crystal Falls, Oct. 17-19.

The Thursday evening Bible study is being replaced by a noon fellowship and Bible study, meeting either in the church or in homes. A men's Bible study has been started, meeting on Monday evenings.

Stacy, Minn.—A new piano was dedicated at *Hope Lutheran*, Wyoming, on Sunday, Oct. 19. A potluck dinner followed the service.

At Family Night at Sunnyside Lutheran on Nov. 2, Jonathan Lindell, director of the World Mission Prayer League, will present a program about Nepal. He served as a missionary there for about 25 years.

Minneapolis, Minn.—Average attendance at Medicine Lake Lutheran

Church-World News

LCMS President Preus will not seek re-election

ST. LOUIS—Dr. J. A. O. Preus will not seek a fourth term as president of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

That surprise announcement was made by Dr. Preus to the members of the Synod in a statement in the October issue of the Synod's official publication, *The Lutheran Witness*.

In that notice, Dr. Preus says, "My reason for this decision is that after 12 years and three terms in the office I believe the Synod needs a change in leadership, a new face, new directions, and new interests. Many pastors stay in a parish too long and I believe a change in synodical leadership will be beneficial. We have a three-term, 12-year limitation for nearly all synodical offices and I think there is much merit to the idea."

Dr. Preus noted that he is making the announcement at this time because the congregations of the Synod are beginning the process of submitting nominations for the president of the Synod who will be elected at the July, 1981 convention in St. Louis.

After expressing his thanks to the people of the Synod, Dr. Preus said,

"There are many things a person might say at such a time as this. Naturally I am interested in seeing a good and talented man elected as my successor, but I assure you I will take no position favoring any individual candidate, since I believe the Synod should have a completely free and open election."

"However, having served for 12 years I have ideas as to the qualities required: strong faith, a close relationship with his Lord, patience, love of people, tact and good judgment, a good mind, the courage to make decisions and sometimes the grace to unmake them, independence to stand alone, administrative talents, and the ability to delegate to others and trust them and even forgive their failures as the church will forgive his. The church needs a president for the '80s and no longer for 1969."

He then stressed two qualities as especially important in electing a synodical president: "1. He must be doctrinally sound. . . he must know our theology, believe it, teach it, and confess it—without equivocation or uncertainty."

"2. He must not be the creature or possession of any faction or clique in the Synod - left, right; lay, clergy; regional; open or secret. There will always be politics in the church, and always differences of opinion, but when one group thinks or acts as if it owns the president and the powers given to his office, the church is in trouble."

Dr. Preus closes his letter, "Our church has many talented pastors and I am confident God will guide us well as we nominate, consider the candidates, and ultimately elect one of them as our president. May God bless us in His service and to His glory."

Synodical observers had expected that Dr. Preus would have been readily re-elected in 1981 had he run. Dr. Preus indicated that he had no plans after completing his term of office, but rather is more concerned at present with carrying out his responsibilities as president. Preus will continue in office with full constitutional responsibility and authority until the new president is installed in September, 1981.

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.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Eagle Butte

Elmer Johnson, April 18, Emmanuel

Ray Bayless, 90, June 11, Emmanuel

WISCONSIN

Boscobel

Emma S. Holt, 92, Sept. 21, Trinity

Sunday School this fall has been up 30 from last year.

Mr. and Mrs. Roger Strom and family are back in Saudi Arabia after a summer visit in Minnesota. A former chairman of the congregation, Roger teaches in a U. S. school overseas.

PREACHING MISSION

Bemidji, Minn.

Bethany Lutheran Church

R. S. Persson, pastor

Nov. 16-20

Rev. Jerome Nikunen, Roseau, Minn.,
speaker

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.

Minneapolis, Minn. 55441

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That Special Pension Fund Offering

The Special Pension fund is used to assist pastors and/or pastor's families in the event of an illness, accident or death. The Pension Board, under advisement of the AFLC Coordinating Committee, appropriates necessary assistance to the needy individuals. During the past years, several pastors have been helped in their time of crisis. Your continued support of this special fund is appreciated.

—AFLC Pension Board

