AMBASSADOR

April 3, 1990

"Easter morrow...
Light ever glowing
Life overflowing!"



LGHT on the WAY

meditations on God's Word

COVER

from "Easter Morrow Stills Our Sorrow" N.F.S. Grundtvig, Hymn 196 Concordia

Volume 28 Number 7

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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The key to life

he central teaching of the Bible and of the Christian Church is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Jesus said to His disciples, as recorded in Luke 18:31-34, that He was going to Jerusalem, there to suffer and to die, but to rise again on the third day. This was the hardest teaching for them to understand and accept. They were not anticipating His resurrection. In fact, the Lord Jesus had a hard time convincing them that He was alive.

That is reflected in the choice of the Gospel texts for Easter and the days following. One of the Gospels tells how the women who found the tomb empty ran and found Peter and John. They rushed to the tomb and saw the linen wrappings for both the head and body (John 20:6-8), but the body was gone. Then John believed the good news of His resurrection.

Then we look at the appearance to the two men on their way to Emmaus (Luke 24:25, 26), where Jesus said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory."

Or consider the appearance to the 11 disciples recorded in John 20:27, where He says to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see my hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing."

Paul also recognized the resurrection as the key to faith. In I Corinthians 15:3, he says, "I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received,

that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." But Paul did not stop there, He goes on to say that if there is not resurrection, then Christ was not raised and our preaching is vain and our faith is worthless and you are still in your sins (I Corinthians 15:13-19). But Paul goes on to say that Christ has been raised from the dead and is alive today.

I have conducted many funeral services in my lifetime. In every case the thing that matters at such a time is whether or not that person trusted in Jesus. Nothing else really counts. I am happy when it can be said that the person went home to be with the Lord.

What a joy to know that you and I can come to Jesus just as we are and then to have that blessed assurance that we, too, shall rise and be with Jesus.

A blessed Easter to you and yours!

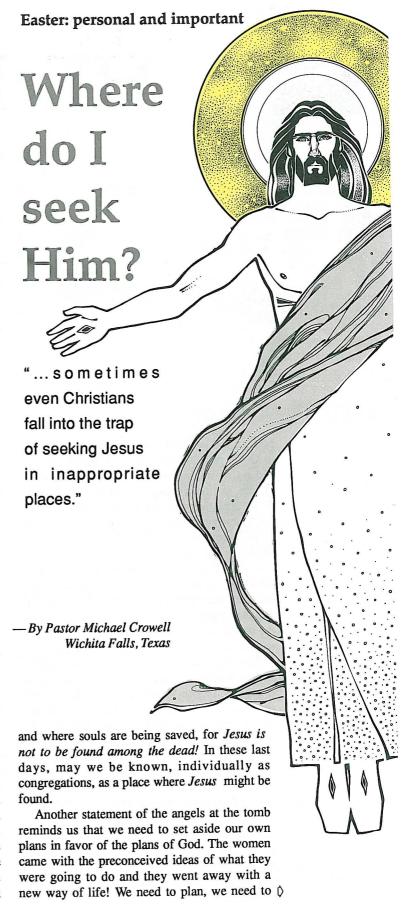


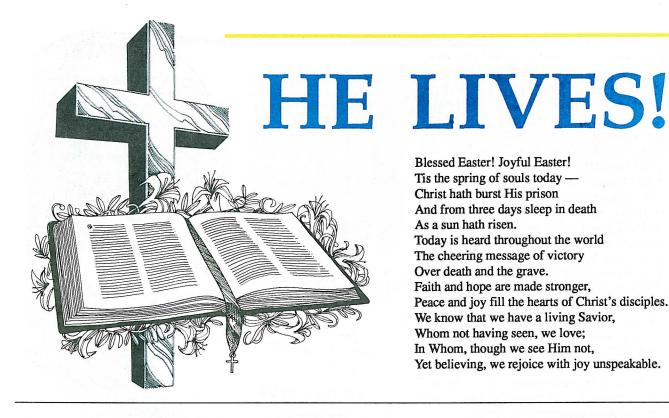
by Pastor James Asp

n Luke 24:4-8, we read: "And it happened that while they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling apparel; and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them 'Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' And they remembered His words" (NASB). Coming to the garden tomb that day, the women did not expect to find a living Jesus, but to prepare His dead body in accordance with Jewish custom. Instead, they came face to face with the greatest miracle of all time! As we look again to this familiar portion of Scripture, I think that we need to look into our own hearts and to ask ourselves the question, "Where do Iseek Him?" The reality of our times is that many are seeking to fill that "God-shaped hole" in their lives with everything but the Savior! And sometimes even Christians fall into the trap of seeking Jesus in inappropriate places.

The angels at the tomb challenged the women, "Why do you seek the living One among the dead?" I fear that often, as we fail to recognize the power and reality of the resurrections, we begin to seek Jesus among the dead as well! "He lives...I serve a risen Savior," states a familiar hymn; and yet too often we live as if Christ is still in the grave. This glorious fact of His resurrection is meant to instill in us as believers the freshness and power of new life, yet too often we appear as dead as the world in which we live. Why? Because we are seeking Him "among the dead." We cannot find Jesus apart from the living Word and apart from living congregations. We need to hear that living Word, because as the Scripture says, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (KJV). For without faith, we cannot please God! Christian, look to your own life and ask yourself if you are still seeking God in the things of this world, which cannot give life, or have you found Him in victorious resurrection? For the resurrection of Jesus also means resurrection and new life for us!

This challenge of seeking Him among the living is for our Association of Free Lutheran Congregations as well. We need to continue in prayer that we will remain a "spiritual movement among Lutherans," and not become just another lifeless denomination. Our future depends on having living and free congregations, where the Word is pre-eminent





Blessed Easter! Joyful Easter! Tis the spring of souls today -Christ hath burst His prison And from three days sleep in death As a sun hath risen. Today is heard throughout the world The cheering message of victory Over death and the grave. Faith and hope are made stronger, Peace and joy fill the hearts of Christ's disciples. We know that we have a living Savior, Whom not having seen, we love; In Whom, though we see Him not, Yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable.

WHERE DO I SEEK JESUS? -

prepare, but we need also to give ourselves over to God's purpose and plan. God's plan did not end at Calvary, but found its fulfillment in resurrection, in final victory over death and sin. And as we seek that plan for our lives, we will also find ourselves living in victory! Our will needs to be given over to that of the Father, who shows us the way to victory when all that we can see is defeat. As the women came that day, the reality of the resurrection transformed them and they became witnesses for Christ. That call and that empowerment is with us today as well. As individuals and as a church body, may we experience victory in sharing our risen Savior.

This experience of resurrection power will be ours as we trust not in the words and thoughts of men, but in the Word of God. The angels reminded the women of what Jesus had said and that the prophecies had foretold Him, and the text says, "they remembered His Words." We come again to the Word, because this is our "measuring rod." Our personal stand on God's Word will determine our Christian walk. If we live in doubt of its reality, power and truth, our lives will not be victorious. Only as we stand on the promises of God's Word do we experience victory and meet the real Jesus. Only as the women remembered His Words did they recognize Him as Lord and Savior, rather than a mere dead prophet!

Where do I seek Jesus? This is a personal question to each of us, one that must be answered. We will all give an account of what we have done with Him, before the Father on Judgment Day. There will be no other standard, no one to compare ourselves with, other than Him. And the question will be, where have you sought Jesus? I pray that each of us might testify that we have sought Jesus among the living, because we have by faith experienced His resurrection and new life: I pray that we may have sought Him in His plan of salvation and in His Word, for it is there that we experience resurrection power and victory.

The message of Easter is a personal one. The women who met the angels and later came face to face with a risen Jesus, were individuals; they were real people. As they personally heard the Word of God and as the Holy Spirit called them and empowered them through that Word, they responded personally. We, too, are called to respond to this message of Easter, recognizing as Luther did, "that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him, but the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith." As the Spirit calls, may we not resist that call, but give ourselves over to it. Then Easter is indeed personal and becomes vitally important to us, for it means victory and life for us. Resurrection becomes a fact of life.

That Christ rose from the dead
Is the most tremendous fact of history,
The pivotal point in the annals of mankind.
On this rock is built the faith and hope
Of sinful humanity.
If this precious keystone is taken away
The entire arch that bridges the great gulf
Betwixt a holy God and lost sinners
Must tumble down.
If Christ be not raised from the dead,
Then is faith and hope in vain
And mankind will be swallowed up
In an everlasting and gruesome night.

But Christ did not remain in the grave. Death could not hold Him captive. He had the power to give His life And to take it again. He truly died on the cross For our sins. But just as He truly arose on the third day For our justfication, He that was dead is alive And liveth forevermore, With all power in heaven and on earth. The historical reality of Christ's resurrection Is as impregnable as the historical reality Of His life and death. He who slumbered in the grave Is exalted now to save.

The Christ is risen.
As it began to dawn Easter morning,
There was a great earthquake,
For the angel of the Lord descended from heaven
And rolled back the stone from the door
Of the sepulchre.
His countenance was like lightning
And his raiment white as snow.
And for fear of him the keepers did shake
And become as dead men.
To the women who had come to see the sepulchre,
The angel said: Fear not ye —
The Christ is not here —
He is risen!

Jesus lives.
From the gloomy house of death
Forth the Conqueror has gone.
And because the Christ is risen from the dead,
Faith in Him is not vain
Nor is the preaching of the Gospel
Of the living Savior a vain message to sinners.
But vain was the Roman guard,
Vain was the great stone,
Vain was the royal seal,
And vain was the wicked effort of Christ's enemies.
The Christ was dead,
But see: He liveth!

Gerhard Rasmussen (Vesper Meditations)



Potential for blessing

God has abundantly blessed our Association. In the early days of the Association the Lord provided for us the beautiful grounds and building on the shores of Medicine Lake that has adequately served as our headquarters. With the growth of the Bible School and its ministry to the youth, additional buildings were added to the campus. More recently, with the move of other ministries of the church to the campus and other ones soon to become a part of the campus family, the need for additional space has been seen. The proposed new Administration Building would provide this necessary space. A new building on the campus for the business offices of the Association would be a blessed addition to the facilities and would alleviate what crowding we have.

We must maintain as our priority a commitment to our ministries such as

World and Home Missions, the Bible School and Seminary. This new building would enhance the ability of our ministries to carry out their work, provided that we recognize that it is a further commitment over and above our responsibility to provide for and maintain these various ministries of our Association.

If this project can be undertaken without detracting from our current financial responsibilities, then this building would furnish the additional space needed to efficiently carry out our tasks related to the Lord's work.

Pastor Eugene Enderlien World Missions Director ittle by little the hymnal committee has been chipping away at the monumental hymnal project. Thus far we have developed a table of contents and reduced our list of hymns to consider and also need to edit out a few more from our present list. The hymnal should not really have more than about 650 hymns. We would like to thank all of you who have sent in lists of hymns you would like in the book. Those lists helped us form the large numbers of hymns from which we drew.

The work goes more slowly than I would like because we are volunteer workers and can only put in work in our spare time. Pastor Brian Davidson has been hired part-time for a few months to help get much of the editing done. We are thankful for his abilities and willingness. We also will need volunteers from the AFLC for many tasks. One thing some of you could be work-

Hymnal committee progress

ing on right now is the indexes. Let me know if you can help. You would take the list of hymns and help develop topical indexes and indexes that match hymns with Scriptures and pericope lessons. We also need a very responsible person (perhaps even a lawyer) to volunteer to faithfully work with the copyrights. Any one who may be a printer or typesetter who is willing to work on this project also should contact me. The hymnal needs your prayers.

One donation has already come in to help pay for copyright costs. Any church, WMF, Luther League, or individual that would like to support this hymnal project may send designated gifts to the AFLC. The hymnal will eventually pay for itself and perhaps be a source of income for the AFLC in time. The need right now is to come up with the money to typeset and print it. This would probably be recovered by sales of the hymnal in a year or less so it is only a temporary expense. All donations will help offset these costs. I am not worried, however, because if the Lord wants this project to be completed, He will provide as He has so abundantly up until now. The blessing of a tight budget is that you are not tempted to be careless with God's provision.

The proposed table of contents and tentative hymn selections are being published in *The Lutheran Ambas-sador*. Please feel free to respond to this material with constructive criticism. I realize that we all get very

Tentative proposal for *Ambassador Hymnal* Table of Contents

- I. Preface
- II. Services (25 pages)
 - A. Morning Worship (Concordia, p. 408)
 - 1. Introduction
 - 2. Service
 - 3. Holy Communion
 - B. Holy Baptism
 - C. Confirmation

(The above may be found in the AFLC Ministerial Acts.)

- D. Other Supplementary Services
 - 1. Holy Communion
 - a. Luther's Communion Preparation Questions
 - b. Service
 - 2. Church School Service
 - 3. Common Service (Simplified from SBH)
 - 4. Alternate Worship Orders (Simple Outlines)
- E. Baptismal Service in Cases of Emergency
- III. Worship, Devotional, Doctrinal Resources (65 pages)
 - A. Calls to Worship
 - B. Benedictions, Doxologies
 - C. Confessions of Sin
 - D. Declarations of Grace
 - E. The Way of Salvation
 - F. Prayers for Private Worship
 - G. Plan for Reading the Bible through in One Year

- H. Church Year Explained
- Pericope (List of Scripture Lessons, Not the Texts Themselves)
 - 1. AFLC w/Trinity Season
 - 2. Common Lectionary w/Pentecost Season
- J. Augsburg Confession
- K. Luther's Small Catechism
- L. Creeds
 - 1. Apostles'
 - 2. Nicean
 - 3. Athanasian
- M. Scripture Selections, Responsive Readings
- IV. Hymns (670 hymns, 625 pages)
 - A. The Church Year
 - 1. Advent: First Coming of Christ (46)
 - 2. Christmas: Birth of Christ (36)
 - 3. New Year (4)
 - 4. Epiphany: Manifestation, Life and Ministry of Christ (7)
 - 5. Lent:
 - a. Suffering and Death of Christ (29)
 - b. Palm Sunday (4)
 - 6. Easter: Resurrection of Christ (22)
 - 7. Ascension of Christ (7)
 - 8. Pentecost: Holy Spirit (12)
 - 9. Trinity (7)
 - 10. Reformation (3)
 - 11. Thanksgiving (10)
 - 12. Christ the King: Second Coming and Eternal Reign of Christ (10)

ROAD TO EMMAUS

The disciples of Jesus walked along the way

That led to Emmaus; they had much to say

About Jesus, who was crucified and rose from the dead.

Their hearts were saddened from what had been said.

Jesus joined His disciples along the road;

He opened the Scriptures; they did not behold

It was the Lord Himself who walked at their side!

He abode at their house, they did in Him confide.

Walk with Jesus on life's dark, narrow road;

He will brighten your path, give strength to your soul!

The Scriptures He'll open and you'll understand

There's no way but Jesus to that bright Promised Land!

Ruth B. Mundt

tional about music and I understand strong letters you send, but do try to be objective and helpful rather than reactionary. It is easier on my stomach.

People ask when the hymnal will be ready. Many people want it yesterday. A realistic date of release would be the Annual Conference 1992. This is even pushing it because it will take two or three years to secure copyrights. We

are going as fast as we can but will not rush the job if that means a poor hymnal. Quality and usefulness are priorities. If your church can't keep your present hymnals taped together for two more years, we understand, but we do believe that you will be so pleased with this hymnal that it will be worth your while to do what you can to wait for this book.

The name of the book is Ambas-sador Hymnal. It is a biblical title that reflects the AFLC publications but still could be used by non-AFLC churches. We hope you are excited about this project. If you have any questions or comments, keep in touch.

Pastor Thomas C. Olson Cumberland Lutheran Parish 2311 10th St., Cumberland, Wis. 54829

13. Other Special Days (5)

- a. All Saints
- B. The Congregation at Worship
 - 1. Prayer, Praise (71)
 - 2. Opening, Morning (20)
 - 3. Closing, Evening (12)
 - 4. Means of Grace
 - a. The Word of God (12)
 - b. Baptism (6)
 - c. The Lord's Supper (13)
 - 5. Confirmation (5)
 - 6. Church, Ministry (12)
 - 7. Missions (25)
 - 8. Home, Family (4)
 - 9. Children's Songs (37)
 - 10. Marriage (3)
 - 11. Service Music (11)
- C. The Christian Life
 - 1. Faith, Justification (20)
 - 2. Call, Repentance (29)
 - 3. Following Christ (59)
 - 4. Witness, Testimony (55)
 - 5. Trust, Confidence (43)
 - 6. Aspiration, Hope (11)
 - 7. Death, Burial (7)
 - 8. Eternal Destiny (6)
- D. National Songs (7)
- V. Acknowledgments, Tables, Indexes (35 pages)
 - A. Acknowledgments
 - B. Copyright Acknowledgments

- C. Table of Proper Psalms for Festivals and Seasons
- D. Table of Scriptural Themes for the Church Year
- E. Scriptural Background of Hymns Index
- F. Hymns for the Church Year Index
- G. Authors, Composers, Sources of Hymns Index
- H. Tunes Index
- I. Meters Index
- J. Hymn Topics Index
- K. General Index
 - 1. Titles Bold Type
 - 2. First Lines Regular Type

Approximately 770 pages. (Other hymnals run between 600-1000 pages so we should be able to use good strong paper and still have a reasonably-sized hymnal.) 8-5/8 x 6 x 1-3/8.

Page Numbering — To avoid the conflict between page numbers and hymn numbers which exists in several hymnals, an adaptation of the selection numbering system of the Hymns for the Family of God could be used. For example the first order of service could be #1 with page numbers 1A, 1B, 1C, and so forth, each of the items in the front section could be numbered that way going right on through the creeds each receiving a number, each Scripture selection receiving a number, each hymn receiving a number on through the indexes being numbered like the HFFOG book (but I would like to see the A, B, C principle added so that each page would have a number.) This system could avoid a lot of the confusion found in books that use only page numbers or use page and selection numbers on the same pages. Think about it!

—Pastor Olson

(The third of four parts)

In the second installment of this paper prepared for a class at Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Dr. Monseth showed how Dr. Sverdrup aimed for a middle position in America between the Norwegian Synod and The Eielsen Synod, stressing the significance of the congregation. He went on to begin his discussion of the "free" congregation. The congregation is modeled after the church of the New Testament. While a detailed picture of the congregation is not given in the Scriptures, the basic form is given. The essence of Sverdrup's thinking is found in the words of Principle No. 1: "The congregation is the right form of the Kingdom of God on earth."

7 he "Free" Congregation. A descriptive word, implicitly if not always explicitly attached to Sverdrup's references to what he felt was the New Testament conception of the congregation, was the term "free. The "freedom" of the congregation was understood by him in two ways. The first and most important type of freedom and the one which if missing nullified the other, was spiritual freedom. Sverdrup believed Christian liberty is "fundamentally freedom from the bondage of sin."35 For this reason the congregation is not truly free except the Son of God make it free. "Genuine freedom is a spiritual reality, a gift of the Spirit who works through Word and sacraments in the free and living congregation. It is a release from the bondage and tyranny of sin made possible by Jesus Christ. In being set free from such bondage a person is free to love and serve the Lord in the congregation according to the gifts of grace given him."36

This freedom "to love and serve the Lord in the congregation" carried with

"...Sverdrup did not thereby believe that he was minimizing the pastoral office."

GEORG SVERDRUP

champion of the free congregation

- By Dr. Francis W. Monseth, Dean Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary

it for Sverdrup full warrant for the layman to be also part of the ministry of proclaiming the Gospel even in the regular services of the congregation. In the spirit of Luther he stressed that "every Christian is a priest, that every Christian is called to be a worker, and that the true Christian is one who uses the gifts of the Spirit and the measure of faith accorded him by God for the edification of the congregation."37 But Sverdrup extended the practical application of the meaning of this priesthood beyond Luther in his full endorsement and encouragement of lay preaching. In doing so Sverdrup did not thereby believe that he was minimizing the pastoral office. "The calling of a pastor," he said, "creates a living center for the work of the congregation, and the work of the individual Christian gathers around the pastoral office. The pastoral office is the trunk which constantly brings nourishment to the branches."38 The pastoral office is needed to nurture the believers and encourage the use of the gifts of grace.

Though he realized the possibility for the abuse of lay-preaching activity, he said this does not permit pastors "to forbid the preaching of the Word by laymen in the congregation. "Let us do all in our power to kindle the spiritual gifts and encourage their use," he counselled, "and when we have done all that we can, then we have earned the right to criticize their misuse."36 A congregation is free, then, as it has been set free by Christ and manifests this freedom by allowing the expression of the gifts of grace by the laity in its regular life of fellowship, worship,

teaching and evangelistic outreach. As it does so, Sverdrup thought the congregation would develop and progress into God's full intention for it on earth. In an essay he wrote,

"This, then, is freedom, that each man and each woman who loves the Lord may have the permission and opportunity to serve Him in the congregation. Thereby the congregation will become truly God's people and the handmaid of the Lord. Thus, the free congregation is not an obstacle for Christianity; it is rather the proper and correct form for the outward appearance of Christianity in the world."40

But "freedom" for Sverdrup meant also that the congregation is free from external civil and ecclesiastical authority. The expression of the former was in his opinion located in such state church systems as that of Norway, while the Roman papacy as well as all "Catholicizing" American Lutherans represented ecclesiastical bondage. The sovereignty of the local congregation in full government of all its affairs was for Sverdrup to be sought, and having been gained, maintained, guarded and cherished. This sovereignty, however, was only applied in the congregation's relationship to any external human authority.

A chief architect in the drafting of a set of statements which were to serve as "fundamental principles" (see appendix) of the Lutheran Free Church, Sverdrup's hand is particularly noted in this respect in the fifth statement where the sole authority of the congregation is set forth: "The congre-

continued on p. 15

ASKING THE IMPOSSIBLE

man stood for a while in silent awe on the rim of the Grand Canyon in Arizona and then said, "Something must have happened here." A bit simple, perhaps, but so true. One cannot help be stirred and moved before that great spectacle.

One day long ago three women stood before an open tomb. Two days before they had seen where the body of Jesus had been placed. The tomb had been sealed; now it was open and the body was gone. An angel, it must have been an angel, said, "Do not be amazed...He has risen, He is not here." It was asking the impossible that they not be amazed.

Centuries after, we are celebrating the resurrection of Jesus once again. We know the story so well. Just as it is hard to be blase at seeing the Grand Canyon on repeated visits to it, on this Day of days we are stirred anew at the message of our Savior's rising from the dead. We never get over our amazement. It is asking the impossible that we do so.

We notice three things about the resurrection:

1) It wasn't an ordinary happening. Raisings from the

dead weren't a common occurrence. Devout Jews had read about the phenomenon in their Scriptures, but it was rare. Some knew that Jesus, who called Himself the Resurrection and the Life, had miraculously brought back to life a 12-year-old girl, the son of a widow at Nain and Lazarus of Bethany, the latter after four days. But these were extraordinary events.

The women and the disciples, who had all cast their lot with Jesus, were amazed that first Easter Day at the news that Jesus had come back to life. We still thrill at the story today.

2) The resurrection was world-changing. The crucifixion of Jesus had seemed the end for the disciples. He had fore-told His resurrection but they did not expect it. Still trying to make sense out of what had happened, they were bewildered and disheartened.

Then the news came that Jesus was alive. It was asking the impossible that they not be amazed. Everything changed then. Then they believed and understood the Master's earlier words. Shortly, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they went out to tell the world about the Lord. World history changed because of these events.

OUR PRESIDENT WRITES

Your heavenly Father knows

good portion of my time in the office is occupied with listening to and trying to deal with problems and various needs in our church.

A few days ago, a colleague was in my office and we were discussing the shortage in our budget receipts for the year that had just come to an end. I expressed my concern about the needs in Parish Education where only 58% of the goal was reached and for Home Missions where 69% of the goal came in. We discussed the problem that Parish Education faces in trying to get the newly revised Grade Four materials printed. In Home Missions there will be new congregations that cannot be started. I was reminded that General Fund made 111% of its goal; that World Missions reached 92% and Schools were close to 80%. My friend smiled and asked if I had forgotten the motto I have on my file cabinet. I quickly turned my head and the words were still there, "Relax, God's in charge."

This motto had been given to me a number of years ago. I had placed it on my file cabinet. The problem is that it was behind me. I should keep it in front of me so that it would be visible at all times.

What a reassurance. Our Heavenly Father knows all about our needs. That was the message Jesus left with His followers in the Sermon on the Mount. God cares for the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field. He clothes the grass of the field. He told them that they were of much more value than these in God's sight. Most important of all, "Your heavenly

Father knows that you have need of these things."

In the area of personal physical needs all our worrying and fretting accomplishes nothing. We cannot add to our stature. Our anxieties will not put food on the table or outfit us with clothing. God knows that we have these needs, too. He grants us the health, the strength and opportunities to earn what is necessary to meet our needs. The secret is that we "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

In the spiritual realm, as we deal with matters in the church, the same truths apply. We are to be faithful in all areas that God has entrusted to us. But we can "relax, because God is in charge." We see the tremendous needs in many areas. But after all, it is God's work. He knows the needs.

It becomes so much easier to count our blessing and to thank God for all that He has done. Instead of looking at the shortfall, we take note of the fact that last January was the greatest month ever for our benevolences. A total of \$224,478.79 was received in that month. The total contributions for the year reached a new high in giving as our receipts for the year totaled \$1,073,099.59. We thank God!

We don't know what the future holds. There will be opportunities for ministry and untold needs about us. But we know that God knows. The kingdom work is His. When we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, we can "Relax, God is in charge."

— Pastor Richard Snipstead

APRIL 3, 1990 9

EDITORIALS

Millions observe Easter today. Some of the observance is superficial, but the central truth is here: Jesus arose from the dead. It is asking the impossible that we not be amazed, for we still are.

3) The resurrection lights the future. The early followers of Jesus became people of hope. They had believed before the crucifixion that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah of God. Then He died and they were puzzled. The resurrection vindicated their faith. Someone has said that the words "He has risen" form the greatest watershed of history.

Paul writes of Christian hope in I Corinthians 15. If there is no resurrection, he says, the situation is hopeless. But then hear these words: "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (v. 20). First fruits indicate that there will be more, hence the belief in the great resurrection on the Day of the Lord.

Marvelous as the thought of resurrection is, it must be tempered by the knowledge that, according to the words of Jesus Himself, some will be raised to life, some to judgment (John 5:28, 29). Therefore, it is imperative that here in this life our faith and trust be in Jesus, the conqueror of death and the grave. It is such who will be raised to share in heaven's glory.

May we extend joyous Easter greetings to all our readers. Christ is risen! Praise God! May this knowledge make all the difference in your life today and always.

ARTICLE V

he congregation directs it own affairs, subject to the Word and Spirit of God, and acknowledges no other ecclesiastical authority or government above itself" (The Fundamental Principles).

The *Principles* in question are sometimes referred to as the *Fundamental Principles*, at other times as the *Guiding Principles*, as we did last time. Fundamental and Guiding are two ways of translating the Norwegian word *ledende* and you can take your choice, but we will try to observe the more general usage in the AFLC, *Fundamental Principles*.

Principle No. 5 sets forth the truth that the local congregation or local church is autonomous or self-governing as far as human jurisdiction is concerned. Principles 10 and 11 address this same point and more things will be stated when they are considered here later on. This emphasis was crucial to those who began the Lutheran Free Church in 1896-97, remembering the state church system in Norway from which many of them had come. They wanted a new set-up in the new land.

The independence of the congregation is derived from the fact that no system of rule over local churches is described in the New Testament. Church officers are mentioned in the New Testament (bishops or overseers, deacons and elders) but always in relation to the local congregation not a government over several congregations or more.

It is true that the church in Jerusalem was the object of respect and affection as the "mother church," but that city never became the seat of government of the Christian Church. When Paul came back to Jerusalem about 28 years after Pentecost, the Judaizers were strong there and the Christian church, whatever its size by then, was not powerful enough to rescue Paul from his enemies.

Yet, while the local congregation is independent, it is under two powerful masters, the Word of God and the Spirit of God. It isn't free to do as it pleases, but always seeks out the mind of the Lord. It isn't free to go contrary to what the Bible teaches. Our only quotation from Georg Sverdrup today is this: "And so absolute is this authority (of Word and Spirit) that the congregation is no longer a congregation when it tears itself from it, and just as long is a congregation a congregation when it follows this authority."

How can a local church know what the mind of the Lord is? First of all, from the Holy Scriptures. This presupposes the willingness to search them out, as did the Bereans of old. Both pastor and people must be involved in this. Second, there must be diligence in prayer, both in the private closet and the prayer meeting. And, third, there must be obedience to the commands and directions of God's Word. "If you love Me, keep (be obedient to) My commandments."

We boast that our congregations are free. Humanly speaking, they are as free as we know how to make them. May they always be so. Of greater concern must be this: that they are living congregations, for, as Andreas Helland (one of Sverdrup's biographers) wrote, "True Christian liberty is fundamentally freedom from the bondage of sin" (emphasis ours).



Association of Free Lutheran Congregations 3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences - Feb. 1 - Feb. 28, 1990

FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	REC'D IN FEBRUARY	TAL REC'D TO DATE	%* TOTAL
General Fund \$	223,110.00	\$ 9,688.04	\$ 9,688.04	4
Schools - (AFLTS)	136,822.00	2,557.05	2,557.05	2
(AFLBS)	186,850.00	5,398.85	5,398.85	3
Home Missions	433,616.00	15,234.47	15,234.47	4
World Missions	366,197.00	11,511.75	11,511.75	3
Capital Investments	30,000.00	404.97	404.97	1
Parish Education	64,970.00	3,177.40	3,177.40	5
TOTALS \$	1,442,565.00	\$ 47,972.53	\$ 47,972.53	3
1989-1990 \$	1,308,281.00	\$ 36,069.75	\$ 36,069.75	3
*Goal 8%				

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Depression

Ps. 42:11	Deut. 31:8	Phil. 4:8	Ps. 139:14	Is. 26:3-4

Sickness

Ps. 23	Ps. 46:1	Ps. 103:1-3

- You may want to add other Scripture references which you have found helpful in ministering to special needs.
- ** The acts of encouragement will employ the gifts of mercy, hospitality, giving, etc.

There are many other areas in which we need to encourage one another. Pray that God will reveal specific ways in which you may encourage others. As you employ your gift(s), please remember this verse as a source of encouragement: "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it" (I

-Lois Oscarson

"Doing each duty in His Holy Name"

ENCOURAGEMENT

WMF BIBLE STUDY MAY, 1990

gift, even so minister the same one to another, as I Peter 4:10: "As every man hath received the good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (KJV). 1. What is the meaning of gift or gifts, as used in I Pet. 4:10? The Greek definition of gift is charisma: a (divine) gratuity; a (spiritual) endowment, religious qualification or miraculous faculty; (free) gift (from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and Greek Dictionary of the Bible.) Read Rom. 1:11, 12:6 and I Pet. 4:10. In light of these verses, plus the above explanation from Strong's Concordance, personalize what gifts and the use of them means to you. Read I Cor. 12:11. Identify the source of the

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and how

Ps. 27:14	good hope, encourage and strengthen you in every good deed and
Problems Ps. 22:24-25	Father, who loved us and by His grace gave us eternal encouragement
and other Hab. 3:17-19	as we encourage others. "May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God
Financial Phil. 4:19	d gives us encouragement and comfort in His Word. He will strengthen
	nort(-ation), intreat, pray.
Rom. 8:38:39	isolation): — beseech, call for, (be of good) comfort, desire, (give)
Grief Is. 43:1-2	nort is: to call near, i.e. invite, invoke (by imploration or hortation or
the verse.)	to meaning in Strong's Great Dictionary of the W.T. for the word
Need Word of encouragement **What act of encourage- or *Scripture (Write out a portion of ment could be used to support	Give the dictionary definition of exhort:
*** Preface all you say and do with prayer. ***	hortation) and other supporting gifts. Give the dictionary definition of encourage:
have done it unto Me."	the remainder of this lesson, the focus will be on encouragement
need. If there is genuine love, it may be necessary to support the word of encouragement by an act of encouragement. That act of encouragement may cost you time, money, inconvenience, but be assured by Matt. 25:40 "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye	encourage someone, we see that quality or characteristic within her ich is of greatest value in the work and building up of God's kingdom e on earth.
Equipping ourselves for encouraging others. We need to know Scripture passages that will help in times of specific	need to <i>encourage</i> one another in the use of our spiritual gifts. When
	w can this be done?
in need of encouragement?	h. 4:12-14
Who needs encouragement? What adjectives would describe these	r what purpose are the gifts to be used?
Was there a positive result or did you see any growth or change?	
4. Have you been an encouragement to others? How did you do it'	1. 4:11
answers.	ilable by writing to AFLC Headquarters or in 1965 Annual Reports of AFLC, on pages 74-75.)
 Think back. Can you recall times others have encouraged you' How did they do it? Was there a positive result? Please record your 	o note: An AFLC statement on the "Tongues Movement" is given on Answer Sheet so your Bible Study leader has it. Copies also are
	or. 12:28-30
2. What are some characteristics or qualities of an encourager?	or. 12:8-10
references above as well as Is. 43:7.	m. 12:3-8
1. What is the purpose of encouragement? Refer to the definition and	ses:
B. In Heb. 3:13, we are given the command to encourage one another.	d gives a variety of gifts. Record the gifts you can identify from these

For the remainder of this lesson, the focus

here on earth.

which is of greatest value in the work and bu we encourage someone, we see that quality

A. Give the dictionary definition of encourage

(exhortation) and other supporting gifts.

We need to encourage one another in the use

How can this be done?

Eph. 4:12-14

'n

For what purpose are the gifts to be used?

2. God gives a variety of gifts. Record the gifts

verses:

(Also note: An AFLC statement on the "Tong

I Cor. 12:28-30 I Cor. 12:8-10 Rom. 12:3-8

the AFLC, on pages 74-75.)

available by writing to AFLC Headquarters c the Answer Sheet so your Bible Study lea

and good hope, encourage and strengthen y our Father, who loved us and by His grace ga

word" (II Thess. 2:16-17 NIV).

God gives us encouragement and comfort in l

exhort(-ation), intreat, pray.

consolation): — beseech, call for, (be of go exhort is: to call near, i.e. invite, invoke (by

The meaning in Strong's Greek Dictionar

us as we encourage others. "May our Lord J

"Lord, teach us to pray"

Do you ever feel like your prayer life is disorganized, lacking the structure that you desire? The Lord has given us a pattern that we can all follow, in Luke 11:1-4. The following sections can help you to organize your prayer life.

"Father, hallowed be Thy name." Start by praising God for who He is and what He has done for you. Psalm 100:4 says, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him; bless His name." This is a great way to get our eyes off of ourselves and to center them on the Almighty God. Sometimes singing a chorus or two may be beneficial in praising our heavenly Father.

"Thy kingdom come." The Christian life is one of yielding ourselves to the will of God. When we begin to focus our attention on God through praising Him, the Holy Spirit will impress on us to follow the example of Jesus, who, while in the garden, prayed, "not My will but Your will be done."

It is saying, "God, I want Your kingdom to come and reign in my life."

"Give us each day our daily bread." This is a time to come to the heavenly Father with our requests. The

thought of coming to God daily is emphasized in this request. Give us each day our daily bread. God takes pleasure in His children coming to Him with their needs.

"And forgive us our sins." We all carry with us our old nature that is against God and His ways. But the Lord has given us that great promise, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). Confession is agreeing with God that we are sinful and need the blood of Jesus to cleanse us.

"And lead us not into temptation."
Peter gives a warning about our adversary in I Peter 5:8: "The devil prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." A good closing request to the Lord before entering the day is to ask for His protection and leading throughout the day.

What a privilege we have to communicate to the living God through prayer. The Lord's Prayer is often used during our worship services but it also is an excellent pattern for our daily prayer life. Lord, continue to teach us to pray.

— Bob Halvorson
Devotional Life Secretary
for the Luther League Federation

God shall supply

What do a 4-wheel drive Scout, 60 dressed chickens, a phone-answering machine and an oil furnace have in common? Do you give up? This really isn't a fair question, so I will tell you what the answer is. All four of these items and many, many others were given as gifts to the ARC this past year.

One of the ways in which God provides for the ministry of the ARC is through gifts of money which God's people lovingly give. For these we are thankful. But another way in which God provides for the ministry of the

ARC is through "gifts in kind." As we have already mentioned, these gifts can be anything from a 4-wheel drive Scout to an oil furnace.

Being on the ARC Board has been an exciting experience for me because I have seen how graciously God provides for our needs. Sometimes the ways in which He provides are unique and different. But they still ultimately come from God's gracious hand.

We want to thank those of you who have given some of the many items the ARC has received this past year and in years gone by. But we also want to

Plans for the 1991 LLF Convention announced

"After God's Own Heart" will be the theme for the 1991 Luther League Federation Convention to be held at Estes Park, Colorado, during the third week of July. The theme verse is based on Psalm 86:11, which reads in the New International Version, "Teach me Your way, O Lord, and I will walk in Your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear Your name."

Costs for the convention will be \$150.00 plus transportation of \$100.00. Estimated number of youth attending is 500. There will be room for more.

Bob Halvorson, the youth director at Emmaus Lutheran in Bloomington, Minn., is arranging bus transportation for the event. Your youth will be able to, if the plan works, board a bus close to you and travel all the way to Estes Park and back.

Sessions planned right now, although these may change, are, worship and music, life styles, missions and a question and answer panel on relationships.

Please mark your calendar and make plans to come to the convention. Fund raising, special offerings and the like can begin right away.

Coordinator needed

The Illinois District of the AFLC is looking for a Youth Work Coordinator. This can be a summertime or a year-around opportunity. Relocation expenses will be paid. There is a salary paid to the Coordinator, plus all expenses. Call or write Rev. Dennis Gray, 1121 South First Street, DeKalb, Ill. 60115 (815) 758-2531.

encourage you that God will provide for His work as we seek His face.

Take to heart the wonderful promise in Philippians 4:19, "And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

Rev. Peter Franz, ARC Board

A different person

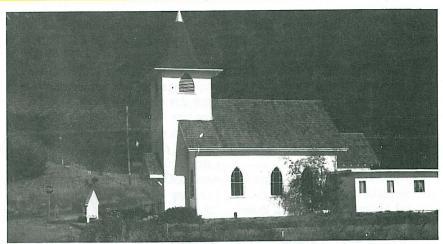


I am Maria Julia Campos. My friends call me Julia. I am from Campo Mourao, Parana.

My conversion was slow in coming, since I had already been going to church for quite a while. At the time, I worked as a maid in homes, but on weekends I always took time off to go to church, as I'd become accustomed to attending. But I never paid much attention to what was being taught. One of the reasons I'd go to church was to see "my" family, the Resendes; they always gave me so much love and support. I started to feel peace in talking to them. Since I was far away from my own family, I started to love the Resende family.

One Sunday it rained all day, but around 6 p.m., it stopped, so I got ready and went to church. The preacher that evening was a Pastor Abel. His words really touched me and from the beginning I really listened to what he said and even cried. When the altar call was given, I went forward and accepted Jesus in my heart and I knew I was a different person from then on. I started to live differently. I saw things in a different light; I now had peace in my life.

Today I am studying at the EBLL (Escola Biblica Luterana Livre) and I am happy to be here. I have been living with the Resende family and participating in the Cohapar Lutheran Church. The pastors there, the Resende family, and other people, were helping me in my Christian walk, but I felt I wanted to learn much more. I talked to my pastor, Pastor Oseias, and he



Spencer Creek Lutheran Church, Eugene, Oregon

The state of Oregon is known for some of the most beautiful scenery in the world. It is an area full of diversity including within its borders a picturesque coastline, the lush Willamette Valley, the majestic Cascade Mountains, and a large desert-like region. Its people are known for having a pioneering, independent spirit. Unfortunately, the state is known as well for being one of the most unchurched areas in the United States. Near Eugene, the second-largest city in this state with such opportunity and need, is Spencer Creek Lutheran Church.

In 1903 the need was seen for a Lutheran congregation proclaiming the Word of God to the Norwegian settlers in the countryside west of Eugene. Thus Spencer Creek Lutheran began.

encouraged me to study at the Bible School. So here I am. I want to dedicate myself to studying God's Word and learn much from God. And if it is His will, I will come back for the second year. I want to develop the talents God has given me. Every time I open the Bible, I learn something new and I want to tell the Good News to others.

I would like to be an evangelical radio commentator. That is one reason I am here at the Bible School — to learn and develop myself in God's Word. In this way I will be well prepared to talk about Jesus. I want to always tell others about Jesus.

A building was erected in 1912 and is still in use today. In 1970, while being served by Pastor Lars Stalsbroten, the congregation joined the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. Other resident pastors who have served the congregation while it has been a part of the AFLC are Elden Nelson, Bill Moberg, Stephen Odegaard and the current pastor, Craig Johnson. The congregation had recently been receiving financial help from the AFLC Home Missions Department. In January, 1990, the congregation, with confidence in God, decided to decline the assistance and to be self-supporting once again.

Eugene has approximately 110,000 people. It is located in the Willamette Valley, between the Pacific Ocean and the Cascade Mountain Range. The wood products industry is an influential part of the local economy. The city is the home of the University of Oregon, with nearly 18,000 students.

Spencer Creek Lutheran is located about seven miles outside of the Eugene city limits. Many of the people who live in the area around the church work in town but enjoy the beauty and tranquility of country living. They often have very busy lives, full of work, family responsibilities and leisure activities. In the midst of their busyness they need to be confronted with the claim of Christ and the reality that Jesus is the One to turn to in order to find meaning in life.

Hymnals available

Pastor Robert D. Giles, Tucson, Ariz., has 80 practically new music edition *Concordia Hymnals* for sale. They are his personal property, not that of the congregation he serves.

Should anyone desire to purchase all or some of these hymnals, please contact Pastor Giles concerning price. He foresees the books as being a real bargain to a congregation that needs them.

Write Pastor Robert D. Giles, 3032 Cole Circle, Tucson, Ariz. 85713 or call 602-883-9698 for further information.

Home Missions gets grant

Lutheran Brotherhood has many fraternal programs designed to aid Lutheranism. One of its programs is known as Church Extension Program Subsidy. For the past 13 years the AFLC Home Missions Department has received nearly \$700,000.00 through this financial program.

During 1989 Home Missions received \$40,000.00 from Lutheran Brotherhood and directed the funds to new work in four states, namely:

Shepherd of the Valley Free Lutheran Church — Palmdale, Calif., Abiding Faith Free Lutheran Church — Ortonville, Minn., Hope Free Lutheran Church — Rugby, N. Dak., Trinity Free Lutheran Church — Janesville, Wis.

In a desire to grow as ambassadors for Christ, the congregation last fall watched the video series "Lifestyle Evangelism." This was followed by special meetings with Pastor Nelson. The reminder was given that many coworkers, neighbors and friends may appear to be in fine shape but they are without Jesus and desperately lost. Along with that was the other reminder that, while we may be a small congregation, we have a tremendous message and, in the Gospel, the answer to each person's greatest need.

— Pastor Craig Johnson

Family Camp dates set

The Mon-Dak-Ada AFLC Family Bible Camp operated at Camp Cherith, Lake Sakakawea, in western North Dakota, will be held June 27-July 1. The theme will be "Families Under Attack" and the theme verses are I Peter 4:12, 13. Pastor Gary Jorgenson, Ottawa, Ill., will be the evening speaker.

Preaching missions

Badger, Minn.

Badger Creek Lutheran Church Martin Christensen, lay pastor Apr. 22-25

Mr. Olaf Friggstad, Frontier, Sask., speaker

Cokato, Minn.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Ralph Tielta, pastor

Apr. 22-26

Rev. Elden Nelson, Minneapolis, Minn., speaker

Eben Jct., Mich.

Calvary Lutheran Church John Mundfrom, pastor

May 6-9

Rev. Peter Franz, Mankato, Minn., speaker

In memoriam

Key: The name of the town was 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.

WASHINGTON

Everett

John Hilmo, 87, Dec. 27, 1989, Calvary.

Bernice J. Herman, 80, Feb. 28, Calvary.

MINNESOTA

Greenbush

Mrs. Clayton (Louise) Schaller, 70, Feb. 28, United.

MICHIGAN

Ishpeming

Donald A. Maki, 40, Feb. 24, Hope.

Mrs. Onni (Sanni) Jarvinen, 75, Mar. 5, Hope.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Waubay

Mrs. Naomi Rudebusch, 87, Feb. 15, Ortley Lutheran, Ortley.

SVERDRUP-

its own affairs, subject to the authority of the Word of God and of the Spirit, and recognizes no other ecclesiastical authority or government over itself.41 The authority of the Scriptures and the Spirit of God over the congregation placed it under the highest and most requiring authority of all and made it more responsible than it ever could be under the tightest of human control, Sverdrup believed. Concerning the authority of the Word of God and the Spirit, he wrote: "So absolute is this authority that a congregation is no longer a congregation when it tears itself loose from it. And only so far is a congregation a true congregation as it subjects itself to this authority."42

The insistence on the autonomy of the congregation did not mean that Sverdrup believed it should not cooperate with other congregations in ministries of mutual endeavor. The application of the autonomy principle did not mean that the congregation was to remain aloof from other congregations. Rather, Sverdrup held, as the seventh statement of the "fundamental principles" states, "A free and independent congregation gladly accepts the mutual assistance which congregations can give one another in the work of furthering the kingdom of God."43 This "mutual assistance" he saw as being realized in conferences of congregations, exchange visits, laymen's activities, and in any other way the congregations could be mutually edified. He also believed the autonomous congregations could and should cooperate together in areas where alone, they would be weak and ineffective. Among such common endeavors are named in the ninth statement of the "principles": "theological seminary, distribution of Bibles and other books and periodicals, home missions, foreign missions, Jewish missions, deaconess institutes, children's homes, and other institutions of charity." Sverdrup himself took an active role in the organization and leadership of several of these "common endeavors" as a member of Trinity congregation in Minneapolis.

Given Sverdrup's understanding of the congregation as an autonomous \Diamond

unit, it might appear that he would have encouraged congregations of the Conference to remain apart from the efforts at union of the Norwegian-American Lutherans into one church body in the 1880s which culminated in the formation of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in 1890. On the contrary, he not only expressed himself in favor of church union but he himself became a leader of the central committee which had been organized to implement the merger. One of his contemporaries remarked that "Sverdrup, more than any other individual, was responsible for the constitution and plan of union."45 He favored the union because he did not feel it would jeopardize the autonomy of the congregation and because he thought it would better enable the congregations to carry out the common endeavors. That Sverdrup had a major part in the formulation of the proposed constitution is noted in its description as revealing "a fear of centralized control."46 His hand is also seen in many of the articles of the union. He even succeeded in persuading the planning committee to initially adopt as the title of the proposed united body, "The Norwegian Lutheran Free Church in America."47

Sverdrup had earlier expressed the conviction that any church union should come in the following sequence of events: "(1) an awakening in the congregations, (2) then cooperation among the congregations, and (3) the organic union of church bodies."48 And it was of utmost importance to him that this union come about by decision of the congregation alone. He wrote in 1884, "We have always tried to emphasize that our goal is one self-governing Lutheran church, and that the way to reach that goal is the self-determination of the congregation."49 He understood the Norwegian Lutheran Synod, termed by him as "the new Missourians," to stand in opposition to this procedure. "They (the new Missourians) want to attain this agreement, not by the self-determination of the congregation, but by the doctrinal discussions of the pastors."50

So-called "free conferences" were held in the 1870s and '80s at which pastors of the various Scandinavian

Lutheran groups discussed selected points of doctrine formulated in a thetical style and after often lengthy debate expressed their approval or disapproval of these theses. It was hoped particularly by the Norwegian Synod that these conferences might help to lay a foundation for eventual union. Though a participant in these conferences for a time, Sverdrup came to view these conferences as achieving little or nothing towards the advancement of spiritual life. Indeed he wrote in reference to these pastors' gatherings, "By discussing hair-splitting questions of doctrine one can arrive at nothing but unspirituality."51

When then did Sverdrup consider to be proper basis for church union? Did he minimize doctrinal agreement in discussions exploring proposed mergers of church bodies? Was he of the type that would inspire a Nathan Soederblom to preach unity chiefly on the basis of cooperation in Christian outreach? No, his outline of what he considered to be basic for union reveals otherwise. Of fundamental importance for him was that the "congregations agree that the Holy Scriptures are the source, rule, and guide in matters of faith, doctrine, and life in the church." Also, that "the congregations agree in subscribing to the commonly recognized symbols of the Lutheran church...since the congregations consider these symbols to be a pure and faithful exposition of the teachings of Scripture." Next, that "the congregations are agreed on Christian education for the children;" also that "the congregations are, in the main, agreed on the order of worship and church organization;" and finally, that "the congregations are generally in agreement on spiritual direction." By "spiritual direction" he meant that the Word of God is to be preached in all its purity and severity, "both to crush and to raise up again." Agreement on these essentials was sufficient to warrant church union for Sverdrup.

(To be continued.)

(Note: Readers who are interested in pursuing any or all of the footnotes contained in Dr. Monseth's article are invited to write to him for further information. He may be reached at 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55441. Please use the footnote numbers as given.)

