



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

February 15, 1983

MISSIONS EVANGELISM WMF PARISH ED SCHOOLS

A
LOOK
AHEAD

AT THE MASTER'S FEET



Pastor Emerson Anderson

Do you really worship?

We have been considering our time at the Master's feet. We have been considering "worship." What are some of its characteristics? A Biblical example for study is the woman who worshipped Jesus in the house of Simon the Pharisee. Read about her in Luke 7:36-50. What can we say about her worship that illustrates its true characteristics?

First, notice that her worship was spontaneous. She didn't wait for a convenient time. Her heart couldn't wait. She broke into the midst of that dinner meeting and worshipped. We should worship out of a heart that can't wait. Notice also that she was unashamed in her worship. She didn't consider what people would

think. She knew her past and she knew that Simon knew and would be offended by her presence. That didn't hinder her worship.

Then, consider that her worship was with intensity and singleness of heart. She was so intent in her worship that she could not be distracted. She was not distracted by the beauty of Simon's home, or by the way the table was set, or by what was being served. She wasn't even distracted by the the important Pharisee named Simon. She went straight to the feet of Jesus and began to pour out her heart. There was such intentness in her heart to worship that nothing could distract her from it. For her to live was to worship Jesus. The psalmist prayed, "Unite my heart to fear Thy name" (Ps. 86:11b). That's what we need if we are to be undistracted worshippers.

Then, let's not fail to notice there were tears. They were not tears of remorse, but of joy and gratefulness. The Lord had done so much for her that she was moved to tears. Outward tears may not be essential to true worship. Some people weep more freely than others. But the condition of heart that makes for tears in those who weep easily must be the condition of the heart of those less inclined to weep. It may be that some of us who shed few tears have never had our hearts so greatly moved as did this woman. But shouldn't it be so?

Most of all, let us note that this woman's worship was at the feet of the Lord. The worshipper finds no other appropriate place to worship. It must be at His feet.

"My God! how wonderful Thou art,
Thy majesty how bright!
How beautiful Thy mercy-seat
In depths of burning light!

Father of Jesus, love's reward,
What rapture will it be,
Prostrate before Thy throne to lie
And gaze and gaze on Thee?

Do we not run the risk of erring in our study of the characteristics of worship by confining ourselves to a single case? Perhaps so; however, other cases reveal similar characteristics. That one leper of the ten who were cleansed, "turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and fell on his face at His (Jesus') feet, giving thanks to Him." The demonic who was delivered from many demons was found "sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind," and he "was begging Him (Jesus) that he might accompany Him." Remember the man who was born blind and given sight by Jesus? He had been cast out of the synagogue. When he learned who Jesus was, he believed "and worshipped Him."

Dear brethren, we know the characteristics of true worship. We know the cause of true worship. We know God calls us to true worship. This is the most important matter we will face in life. In eternity all else will become small by comparison. The Lord has done much for us. Above all, He offers and bestows forgiveness. No man can say there is nothing to move the heart to worship. We will only fail to worship if we neglect the true facts. Consider what great things the Lord has done for you and then let Him know how you feel about it.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

is published biweekly (except the second issue in August) by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55441.

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Send \$10.00 subscription to THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55441. Second-class postage paid at Minneapolis, Minn.

Volume 21 Number 4

USPS 588-620

A LOOK AHEAD

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations has just entered a new decade, her third. In this issue, and next time, leaders in the church take a look into the future and give us an idea of their hopes, fears and dreams. They speak only for themselves, unless otherwise stated, but they speak out of considerable experience in the work they represent. How do their views compare with your own?

Stewardship Board

AS we bring our gifts and offerings to the altar we join our voices together and sing the verse "We give thee but thine own, Whate'er the gift may be: All that we have is Thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee."

We are in partnership with God. He has entrusted us with these material blessings for which we are accountable. "Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy" (I Corinthians 4:12). "All that we have is Thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from Thee." How are we managing that which God has entrusted us?

I can best illustrate this with the example of the banker. He does not own the funds that we deposit in his bank; he is merely the manager of the money which has been deposited. A good banker will invest the money where it will bring the greatest return.

We are to be responsible stewards of all that God has entrusted to us and we can find guidance in the Word of God to help us to be good managers. We are instructed not to lay up treasures upon the earth. "But lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth

nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal" (Matthew 6:20). This is a sure investment! "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse so there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this, says the Lord of hosts, If I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until there is no more need" (Malachi 3:10). Here God is challenging us to test Him and He promises to pour out for us until there is no more need. Think what God has promised! For some this may be a problem, that is, if you have never experienced the joy of giving the tithe or more to the Lord.

We pray, "Thy kingdom come." Let us be realistic! If ten families of a congregation tithe, this would be sufficient to give a pastor the same standard of living as his members have. The remaining families tithing would take care of current expenses and also benevolences. Let's take God at His Word. The tithe rightfully belongs to the Lord.

Systematic giving takes planning and unfortunately too often Christians believe that planning shows a "lack of faith," but the opposite is true. Good planning is accepting the responsibility that God wants to give to His children. "The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps" (Proverbs 16:9).

There are many families who do little if any real planning in the most visible area of their lives. We want to be good stewards in every area of our life. Being a good steward over the financial area is a prerequisite to being a good steward in other areas. "If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous Mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you?" (Luke 16:11).

To be a good steward requires diligence. Every individual or family should develop a budget and learn to live within it. A good budget anticipates unplanned expenses which come to us every once in a while. A budget

does not restrict a person's freedom but it rather expands it.

A good steward is also careful that he does not overspend on himself. I know of people in our AFLC who are doing without some of the comforts of life which most of us consider essential, but they forego these that they may give more to the work of God's kingdom. We, perhaps, would do well to check ourselves in this area of overspending on ourselves.

A budget is necessary to keep those with limited resources free from debt but it is also important for those with greater resources because as good stewards they have a responsibility to control their spending, too. "And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more" (Luke 12:48b).

As individuals and congregations we must ask ourselves, "Are we doing our best for the Lord and His kingdom?" I believe we find the real secret in giving in II Corinthians 8:5b: "They first gave themselves to the Lord, and to us by the will of God." When a person becomes a Christian, he is a new creature, he dies to sin and lives unto God and the chief purpose in his life is to glorify, exalt and magnify the Lord. Our goal is to promote God's gracious purposes for men among men. Christians are partners and co-laborers together with God.

Let us by God's grace give as the Lord has blessed us. "'Test Me,' says the Lord."

I would like to encourage all pastors and congregations to make use of Dr. Waldo J. Werning's study guide on grace giving.

"Lord let it happen to me as You said."



Rev. Ernest J. Langness,
Chairman,
Faith, S. Dak.

EVANGELISM: THE CRYING

The Lord is allowing us to begin a third decade of life as an Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. What lies before us in regard to the ministry of evangelism? What problems do we face? What opportunities do I see for evangelism in our church? These are the topics I will try to cover in a brief way.

Evangelism is a crying need of the hour. The vast numbers of non-Christians in the world make evangelism imperative. The Lord Jesus described His mission by the words: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10), and this concise statement included both His finished work upon the cross (John 19:30), and His unfinished work in the world (Acts 1:1). We notice from the following portions of Scripture that we have a wide door open before us for the work of evangelism. "Therefore said He unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest" (Luke 10:2). "Say not ye, 'There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, 'Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest'" (John 4:35). "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" (Revelation 3:8a). I believe with all my heart this mandate is given from the Lord Jesus Christ to our Association. Yes, indeed, we have a wide door open for us in the ministry of evangelism. May we be found faithful.

Because of the wide open doors that the Lord has set before us, we will encounter problems. I would like to share one problem that I have already encountered in my travels. This problem

"Every person who knows Christ as Lord and savior has a ministry of evangelism in one way or another."

is the teaching of *universalism*. Universalism emphasizes the love of God to the exclusion of the holiness and justice of God. Universalism doesn't believe that a loving God will ever send a person to eternal punishment. They say, "Why evangelize? All will ultimately be saved, so why worry about souls?"

This kind of teaching makes life easy, it takes the message of the cross and the blood of Jesus very lightly. We must impress upon people that *universalism* is false! A person must come to realize that he is a lost and condemned sinner before Almighty God and only the Word of God through the power of the

Publications and Parish Education

The Board of Publications and Parish Education sees its main goal for the next few years to be the job of revising and improving its present Sunday School materials.

It took about ten years, from 1968 to 1978, to complete *The Ambassador Series*. For such a young and small church body as the AFLC to have produced a curriculum of materials for every age group in that period of time, while simultaneously developing its mission work and Bible school and seminary, is not a bad record of achievement! It is something for which to thank God and the many dedicated writers who worked as unpaid recruits.

Naturally, however, *The Ambassador Series* is not perfect. Its overall content and breadth are very good, but there are areas that have been unintentionally neglected. There are study guides and individual lessons that need to be better organized and more clearly written. Such problems are to be expected. There are few areas of Christian life or work in which we expect perfection overnight.

Another continuing problem is how to make lessons attractive to today's children and young people. The core of the truth that we want to present remains unchanged because God and His

Upgrading the series

Word do not change. We want our children to learn Biblical, Lutheran doctrine. Nevertheless, it is a challenge to present it in a form that is attractive to today's youth.

Many children today are already jaded by television and computer games while they are still in grade school or even before. Competition in shaping the thinking of young people is much keener today than it was 40 years ago in the days before television and the computer.

A suggestion was recently made to this writer that churches should use computers and develop programs for them that teach Biblical and catechetical truths. It seems like a very fantastic notion, and yet computers will be replacing paper and ink more and more in the lives of our children. Luther and the Reformers seized upon the new technology of the printing press and used it greatly to their advantage in the 1500's. We may have to do the same with computers in the years ahead.

NEED OF THE HOUR

Holy Spirit can reveal this to him. When man realizes his lost condition, then he is ready for the love of God which is revealed to him through God's only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. This message brings man to repentance over sin and he invites the Lord Jesus Christ into his heart to be his

Savior. The Scriptures clearly teach, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18). Universalism destroys the heart of evangelism, saying that there is no need to evangelize if all will be saved. But the Bible doesn't teach that and we bet-

ter believe God's Word.

The opportunities are great for evangelism in our AFLC. Every person who knows Christ as Lord and Savior has a ministry of evangelism in one way or another. We are all to share Jesus Christ. I believe personal work is very important in evangelism and we can only do personal work with individuals, as we develop a relationship with them. We must develop natural relationships. I believe this is a key to fruitful evangelism. Jesus established natural relationships with sinners. He did not do what they did, but He knew them in a personal way. The Bible says, "The common people heard Him gladly." He was called a "friend of sinners." You cannot reach anybody you cannot touch. If you cannot establish a bond, you will never reach him. And if you are "super-religious," you will never be able to relate to natural people who are unconverted. You cannot reach people you react to. Jesus was never shocked by anybody. He was teaching one day and four Pharisees came dragging a woman whom they had caught in the very act of adultery. Moses said, "Stone her!" What do You say? Stooping down to write on the ground, Jesus said, "Let him who is without sin, cast the first stone," and they all dropped their stones and left. When they left, Jesus said to the woman, "Where are your accusers?" She said, "I don't have any." Jesus said, "I don't condemn you, either. But don't do it any more" (John 8:1-11). Jesus had a totally different response than the religious leaders. That is why people loved Jesus. He didn't condone what she did, but He dealt with what she did differently than He dealt with her. He did not react to her problem. He responded to her need. That is the key. Jesus Christ is the only hope for the world. May we who love the Lord Jesus Christ do the work of evangelism, as He did. Then our ministry will bear fruit that will remain.

Our present goal, however, is to revise *The Ambassador Series*, which, in a sense, is in competition with the materials that are being produced by the large Christian publishing companies. In this competition we have advantages and disadvantages.

First, a seeming disadvantage is that we cannot afford to hire a professional staff to produce a whole new curriculum every one to three years. We cannot be as novel as the large publishers are.

Neither can we use as much color or glossy paper in our printing as they do. We print only 500 or 1000 copies at a time whereas they print hundreds of thousands or millions. Their cost per piece is thus much lower than ours. We must struggle to keep our prices competitive with theirs while at the same time having a much smaller volume.

Our advantages also are considerable. First, our market is a fairly stable and specific one. We produce materials mainly for the AFLC, though some others also use them and are welcome to do so. If local AFLC congregations will be loyal enough to the AFLC to give preference to our materials, then the demand should remain fairly constant. Also, our own materials should meet the needs of our own churches better than any other materials.

Secondly, since we are not continually changing the theme and content of our lessons, we should be able to polish them so that eventually they achieve a level of consistently high doctrinal

quality that far surpasses most of the competition and also includes our own special AFLC emphases.

Thirdly, we have time as an ally. The large publishing houses are constantly preparing new series and therefore the time that they can put into any one series is limited. We are able to work year after year on the same series and so, even using unpaid, non-professional writers and artists, *The Ambassador Series* should be able to rival the others in art work and imaginative teaching aids while being superior in content.

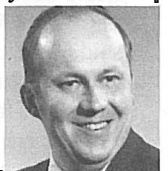
In closing, please give your patient support to the work of Publications and Parish Education. Use our AFLC materials. If you have skill as a writer or artist or in developing teaching aids, volunteer it to Renee Regnier, our executive secretary. When you have a good idea or a solution to a problem, bring it to our attention.

Our desire is to train up young people in the Word of God and a living faith in Jesus Christ. May He use us to His glory!

Rev. Ralph Rokke, Chairman
Minneapolis, Minn.



Pastor Kenneth Pentti
AFLC Evangelist



FUTURE NEEDS and DREAMS

As current chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Association Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC) Schools, Pastor Michael Brandt was being interviewed about his dreams and visions for the AFLC's Bible school (AFLBS) and theological seminary (AFLTS). Pastor Brandt, ordained in the AFLC in 1972, has been on the Board of Trustees since 1978 and a member of the Schools Corporation for ten years.

What would you like to see happening on campus ten years from now? he was asked.

"Ten years from now?" he thought out loud, "I'd like to see the *same* spirit there ten years from now. And the *same* aims, the *same* purposes."

But in addition, the pastor of Amery Lutheran Church in Wisconsin shared some dreams that he said would enhance the Minneapolis-based schools.

"Our view of the future is dim at best," he said. "But God does allow us to dream and then prayerfully seek His will. I can see a need for several considerations."

Mr. Brandt's "Considerations" included the construction of a new multi-use facility, the continued pursuit of education by parish pastors who could be called to teach as the need arose, and what Pastor Brandt called a dream that "might seem...foolish to many," founding a conservative Lutheran college.

In light of recent increases in both schools' enrollments, Mr. Brandt said a new facility is a "real and probable need." The building he envisions would include offices, a library, and classrooms for both the seminary and Bible school. "The buildings we have now were built to be remodeled," he said, "the old classrooms wouldn't be wasted. They were initially made to be converted into more dormitory rooms."

As for library space, Pastor Brandt

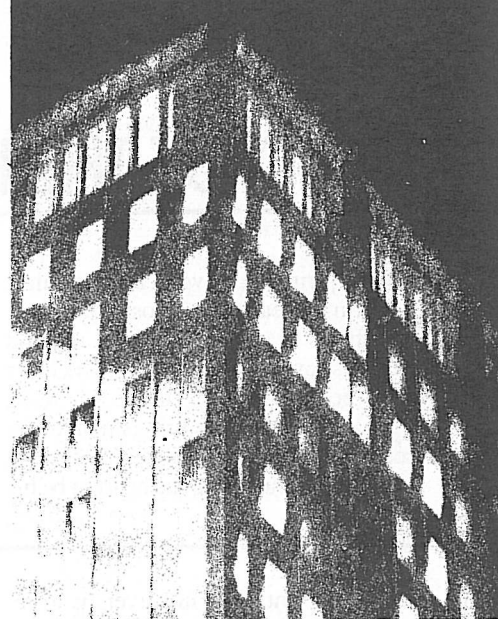
agrees with AFLBS dean Kenneth Moland that a new library is one of the school's most immediate needs. "God has answered prayer to such an extent that we need more room," He said. "And the library is not filled with 'fluffy' material, but with Biblical, Lutheran works. We're very thankful," he added.

With regard to teachers, the current Board chairman would like to see parish pastors taking initiative and pursuing additional education. "The need for qualified additional teachers is close if not already here—if Christ tarries—the need will be ongoing," he said. Pastor Brandt believes the present faculty, made up of seven full-time teachers, which the schools share, is "under a great load." He feels the school presently needs at least one—if not two—extra teachers, but "the Board is unable to seriously consider bringing in anyone, knowing how the economy is right now."

"We need servants. Humble servants," he added.

What the chairman calls his "greatest dream" could also be his most controversial: establishing a conservative Lutheran College. Although many in the AFLC would cringe at the cost of such a task or shudder at visions of another Lutheran-school-gone-liberal, Brandt feels the vision arises out of a great need.

"Many of our Bible school graduates are going to college. Their choices are either humanistic or liberal. Or when they do find a sound Christian college, the emphasis is not Lutheran," he said. Mr. Brandt feels Lutheran Christians attending evangelical Christian colleges sometimes are challenged unkindly and picked on. "A girl from my Dad's (Lutheran) church would come home from a certain Christian college crying. I know that in other Christian



OUR BASE WILL BROADEN



colleges our kids have been singled out and questioned right in class (about Lutheran baptism and communion)," he said.

"I don't want to be misunderstood. God has protected and prepared students in schools riddled with humanistic theology and I praise God for many fine Christian instructors at secular colleges...and for other evangelical denominations who have established schools of higher learning. My aim is not to belittle their place, but to challenge our horizons," Brandt said.

"A sound Lutheran college where academic excellence is sought under the influence of a godly theology is a glorious vision to consider." Brandt shares the embryonic vision with Moland and AFLTS dean Francis Monseth.

He envisions this college, however,

Home Missions

Home Mission work has been a part of the AFLC since its beginning. Over and over the call for help has come from small groups of interested persons. Approximately 28% of congregations presently on the AFLC congregational roster have received some Home Mission help in organizing and affiliating.

As we look forward into the third decade of the AFLC there are many uncertainties, but we must not allow them to cause us to falter in the work our Lord gave us when he said, "Go and make disciples of all nations." That mandate is ever before us. It is clear and absolute. Of ourselves we would falter or even stop, but we have the confidence from the Word that this is God's work, even as we read in Jeremiah 29:11: "I know the plans I have for you." Our strength is in Him alone. It is my firm belief that God has a definite plan and much responsibility for our AFLC in the days ahead. A look at the society in which we live reveals a tremendous need in every community.

As a church we stand at a crossroads. There are many roads we can take. Certainly some would be a dead-end, while others would be filled with much activity but be unfruitful as far as souls reached and won. Our size is respectable enough right now that we could put

things on hold and consider a maintenance ministry as being our priority. Such, I believe, would lead to a stagnant and non-productive church. There are many ways we could choose which would not be in faithfulness to our God and His Word. Thus, it is important that as we stand at this crossroad we reaffirm our stand upon God's Word, rededicate ourselves to His work and seek His direction. As Paul states in Philipians 3:13: "I press on toward the goal." There is also a stirring among Lutherans today that reminds us of the need for a strong and growing Home Mission effort.

Growth never comes without pain. Such pains are normal and must not be thought of as problems or reason to hold back. If our present goal for the 80's of three new congregations per year is reached and some already established congregations affiliate with us, we could conceivably approach the two hundred mark by the end of the third decade. A growing church should experience a snowballing effect and so a doubling or even a tripling of congregations on the AFLC roster is possible. Such will not happen automatically or without effort and planning. As a church we need to seek God's direction in finding fields, entering open doors, supplying pastors and raising funds.

God's resources are unlimited. The Word and prayer are the most valuable resources we know. Experiences gained in the past 20 years are also a resource. Through them we have learned the faithfulness and ample provision of our God.

What does this kind of growth imply? First of all it will result in a broader base—a larger field of ministry, a greater influence and impact upon our society, and a larger body to carry on other AFLC ministries. I suppose the possibility of becoming larger to the point of not being personally acquainted with all the pastors and congregations of the AFLC is also implied. This must have been a very real fear for the disciples as they received the Great Commission, but they did not hesitate or hold back. The world needed Christ, and that is still true today. We must not be content with cozy numbers or ease of ministry. We must accept anew the command and challenge of Christ to "make disciples of all nations," and to follow His leading in the time that remains until He comes again.

Rev. Elden Nelson,
Executive Director



"A sound Lutheran college where academic excellence is sought under the influence of a godly theology is a glorious vision to consider."

to be totally separate from AFLBS—perhaps located at the Association Retreat Center (ARC). He strongly opposes incorporating such a college into the existing AFLC Bible school.

"AFLBS cannot be tampered with," he said. "I feel it would be wrong to try to expand it into a college. Trying to change it into a college couldn't enhance it, but only undermine it."

Amid all these dreams, though, Pastor Brandt wanted to make one thing perfectly clear. "It's the congregations that decide these things. It can't be just one man's dream, or one board's dream...we aren't bosses...we're servants." Before anything could be considered it would need to be the desire of the congregations...our job is to maintain and be 'visionaries.' "

"It's going to take a renewed commitment to Christ and a renewed commitment to the purposes on which our AFLC was founded," he said.

James Lydell Johnson
Bloomington, MN

*"Holding forth
the word of
life, that I
may rejoice in
the day of
Christ that I
have not run in
vain, neither labored
in vain."
Phil. 2:16*

Remember God's Work

"For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead" (James 2:26). This verse truly speaks to us as believers. We cannot just enjoy our Christian faith, we also must work for the kingdom's cause. My area of work as "Director of Development" within the AFLC deals primarily with gifts and giving. I sincerely believe that the future of the AFLC is very bright as we enter our third decade as a church. This is not to suggest that the years ahead will not bring trying times for our church, but the Bible says, in Acts 14:22, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." Testings and trials make us patient and strong.

Much of my work is with the elderly, dealing with gifts, loans, wills and annuities. However, people do not need to wait until they are old to begin to set aside a portion for the Lord. A young couple in their twenties has loaned money to the AFLC, receiving the interest on their investment. They are concerned for our future. We should all decide, first, how much we need to give to our local church and then remember our missions, Bible school and seminary and General Fund. If each member of our Association (over 15,000) had contributed 17 cents per day, our 1982 budget would have been met. A cup of coffee or a package of gum are each more than 17 cents, so if a family of five set aside 85 cents per day—less than \$6.00 per week—our budget would be met. It is easy to say, "Well, I can do that." But remember there are many who don't give as they have been blessed, so those of us who see the need have to give more. As I see it, many of us need to pray for a right attitude toward giving. God has not asked us only to give; Luke 12:31 says, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and *all these* will be added unto you." As we do that sincerely, God will be providing and then directing *all* areas of our life, including our giving.

Traveling throughout the AFLC the past four years visiting members of our churches, I have gained insight into the tremendous financial wealth with which God has blessed them. The prob-

lem is that many don't want to consider or discuss where and how this wealth should be divided at death. Some find couples waiting until one or the other dies or becomes mentally incapable of making a decision. We are not trying to take away from the heirs their rightful portion of the estates, but we do feel strongly that God's work deserves a portion.

Looking ahead, we can see many opportunities in the next decade. We need to ask ourselves what we hope and expect of the AFLC in the future. It is my observation that there are scores of Lutherans who are becoming upset and favor a more conservative Lutheran body such as ours. The mergers that are taking place are taking their toll as values are compromised; the body grows larger and more liberal, to the point of hardly being Lutheran any more. I doubt that Martin Luther would even recognize much of Lutheranism as it is today! I can see the AFLC reaching out to these people as they become aware of what is taking place in the larger Lutheran bodies.

Home Missions outreach is a vital part of our work in the next decade. We need a vision, for as Proverb 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish," and we can see them perishing all around us. We just cannot sit back and pat ourselves on the back for our accomplishments, and there are some. Some of us have just remodeled our churches, built new structures or burned the mortgages—the list goes on. But as these things are accomplished, we need to move on, pray for new vision and direction from God as to what to do next.

Finally, we must continue to seek out more lay workers, encourage our young people for Bible school and seminary, give prayer and financial support to our missionaries, and pray for our AFLC president and church leaders, as well as our local pastors.

The world is changing all the time. It is vastly different from what it was 40 to 50 years ago, but Hebrews 13:8 tells us, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." It is up to us to "launch out into the deep." If our faith does not falter, the opportunities are unlimited. Let us *go* and let God.

Ernest J. Miedema
Director of Development

Come, ye souls by sin afflicted

Come, ye souls by sin afflicted,
Bowed with fruitless sorrow down,
By the broken law convicted,
Through the Cross behold the
crown;
Look to Jesus;
Mercy flows through Him alone

Blessed are the eyes that see Him,
Blest the ears that hear His voice;
Blessed are the souls that trust
Him
And in Him alone rejoice;
His commandments
Then become their happy choice.

Take His easy yoke and wear it;
Love will make obedience sweet;
Christ will give you strength to
bear it,
While His wisdom guides your feet
Safe to glory,
Where His ransomed captives meet.

Sweet as home to pilgrims weary,
Light to newly opened eyes,
Or full springs in deserts dreary,
Is the rest the Cross supplies;
All who taste it
Shall to rest immortal rise.

Joseph Swain
(from *The Church Hymnary*)

editorials

LUTHER, SVERDRUP

Most of the active pastors in the Association, most of the seminarians, and a few visiting pastors attended the annual pastors' conference at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis., last month. It was a conference which featured the historical, the practical and the inspirational. The historical was a look back to Martin Luther and Georg Sverdrup. The practical was a discussion of confirmation instruction and divorce. The inspiration came through the service of Holy Communion, the prayer hours, three Bible studies and a closing worship service.

It was good, early in this year of the 500th anniversary of Luther's birth, to be directed toward the early stages of the great Reformer's life. This included his conversion to evangelical faith in the Lord Jesus.

It is to be hoped that in our church we will pay special attention to Luther this year. Much will be made of him in world Lutheranism this year, yes, in world Protestantism and even beyond. We ought to do that in the Association also. His emphases were the Word alone, grace alone, faith alone, and those are close to our hearts.

In the *Ambassador*, we hope to do something special next fall at Reformation time and the time of Luther's birthday, Nov. 10. In addition to that, we shall attempt to use the name of Luther often in these pages throughout the year.

Dr. Jame Hamre, our speaker on Luther at the conference, reminded us that 500 years from now, if the world stands that long, few of us living today will be remembered in this world. A few may be traced back in genealogical records by enterprising descendants. Perhaps a notation of involvement in church work will have been made. Largely we will have been forgotten, but Luther remains a towering world figure after 500 years. That is quite a thing.

The other historical figure with which Dr. Hamre, a teacher at Waldorf Jr. College, Forest, City, Ia., dealt was Georg Sverdrup. Pastor Francis Monseth, our seminary dean, it was, who ventured the information that Dr. Sverdrup, a founder of the Lutheran Free Church, was born 135 years ago, so this is an anniversary of sorts also.

Sverdrup is a man who deserves continuing attention, too. His vision of the free and living congregation in America is one that lives among us and must live on. We would do well to study his writings more. We can be grateful to Dr. Hamre, the only scholar of non-LFC background we know of who has devoted much study to Sverdrup. He has an unpublished book manuscript on his life and it is to be hoped that it may one day be made available to those of us who are intrigued by this man and his message, indeed are committed to his message.

It was a pleasure to visit again with Dr. Hamre, as well as to listen to him, for we spent four years together on the campus of Augsburg College and Seminary, Minneapolis.

THE DECADE AHEAD

The AFLC has now entered upon her third decade. Those of us who have lived through the past 20 years as active participants in Association life and work may sometimes be heard to ask, "Is it already 20 years since we began?" or "Is it that long already?"

But the calendar doesn't lie and it is now 20 years since the two streams in the Lutheran Free Church branched off in different directions. We must say that these have been good years. While there have been a few occasions of stress none of them caused any sizable defections. In all, it can be said that there has been a good spirit of harmony and unity.

Our work has grown from its humble beginnings. Look at any area and that is the story. Our Schools are stronger, World Missions are stronger, Home Missions are stronger. We have paid our way unto this day. We have developed a Sunday School curriculum. Our pastors have always had a health insurance and retirement program available.

It is true that our total number of congregations remains somewhat the same even though new churches have been established through Home Missions. The reason is that some of our smaller rural congregations have had to close. In many cases the people haven't been lost to us, but have joined another nearby AFLC church. Some of this readjustment will continue to take place as people decide that that is the wisest thing to do.

The decade ahead will be an intensely fascinating one. In addition to a normal program to be carried on, and normal growth one might expect based on previous experience, the next decade will be lived in the midst of preparations for a merger which will bring some five million Lutherans in American together, and the accomplishment of that union, in all likelihood. That is bound to have some effect on the AFLC.

How can we maintain our identity alongside that giant church, found in so many communities where our congregations are? That is, how keep from being over-influenced by the way those fellow Lutherans do things and the decisions they make?

Or this. How well can we assimilate those pastors and congregations which may turn our way as an alternative to entering the Lutheran merger which is coming? After all, we are a small rural church body and there could be some problems in any large influx of new people. But none of us knows how much of that there will be. To be sure, there will be some coming our way.

Two other influences will also be present more than ever before. One is the very ecumenical movement itself

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EDITORIALS . . .

and it is one in which the Roman Catholic Church increasingly becomes involved. As more and more churches do things together in our local communities, AFLC congregations must know their stand vis-à-vis this and be willing to take it. The other influence, also ecumenical in nature, is the presence of the evangelical Reformed churches round about us. We don't think of them as National Council of Churches or World Council of Churches threats, but they do present some differences in theology to us and while we are drawn toward them because of their warm heart for the Gospel we also face the need to preserve our Lutheranism.

So these will be interesting days and we will have to give much thought, study and prayer to these influences which will be very much with us.

There has been a call made to the AFLC to, in these coming days, commit herself totally to the Lutheran Church, that is, to be Lutheran and to care about the upheavals taking place in the Lutheran Church in our day,

and to make herself visible, so that others will know that she is here and what she is.

As to the first part of that call, we should make that commitment, and we do. In regard to the second part, higher visibility, we aren't sure how much more we can do or should do. An obvious self-promotion or acts calling attention to ourselves might produce more negative results than good. Perhaps our best course is to keep on keeping on, working even more diligently to nurture spiritual life in our congregations and institutions. Then if others sense in us the aroma of Christ (II Cor. 2:14), they may investigate our fellowship and perchance be attracted toward it, feeling that we have something to offer them.

There are exciting days ahead, days which will call for the best in us. The decade before us could well be a make or break one for the AFLC. The future is bright but there are shoals which could run us aground, too. God help us to be submissive, yielded, earnest, strong. He won't forsake us as we grow in dependence upon Him with each passing day.



Letters to the editor

plenty already published. Think on these things.

Mrs. Paul Schilla,
Dickinson, N. Dak.

BIBLES, NOT HYMNALS

Again we read about a concerted push to have new hymnals published. What is wrong with the *Concordia*? Granted, much of the printed matter could be eliminated but in these difficult financial times there is a greater need elsewhere. People are pleading for Bibles and there is no money to supply that need. Beginning churches of the AFLC in some areas have had individuals buy the hymnals and there are instances where a member bought books. Of course, there are other worthwhile hymns not found in the *Concordia*. Do those on the hymnal committee feel that the folks who bought these books will be happy to junk them all just because there are others who do not care for them? At the beginning the AFLC wanted simplicity. Each can do as he chooses. The main thing is that the Word of God be presented and accepted as it is written. That has top priority. Then one should consider those who want the Word of God in a written form but there is no money to supply that need. We have a graphic picture in the December 21 *Ambassador* wherein Mrs. Oscar Follen writes under the heading "China

Revisited" about the Bibles she took with her and how much they were prized by the recipients.

This pleading for Bibles reminds us of a vision the apostle Paul had, as written in Acts 16:9, as the reader may recall. How one night a man from Macedonia stood there saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." That is what Paul did. That is what we should do. Let us heed the call for Bibles; there are precious souls longing for a Bible whereby they can be drawn closer to God. That is what will save a nation. The hymnal project need not be forgotten but the needs of so many should have priority. How can they be enlightened when there is nothing to read, so they will have new vistas opened to salvation? Not by us having new hymnals when there are

PRICE TOO HIGH

I am writing to inform you I was disappointed in the raise of the subscription price of *The Lutheran Ambassador*. I am *unable* to pay \$10.00, but I will pay \$5.00 towards it. So please do not send me more than one issue per month. Also, I'm not able to read that much of the finer print so much of it gets unread.

Name withheld
Everett, Wash.

(Ed. note: I regret the difficulty which our raise in subscription cost has made for some readers. But unfortunately we cannot comply with this reader's suggestion and send issues only ever other time. This person will be credited with a half year's subscription.)

As for me, I pray that the Lord will ever preserve me from becoming so worldly-wise, so prosaic, so dead to conceptions of a world of life of a purely spiritual order, so unbelieving with respect to the plainest teachings of God's Word, that I shall no longer find interest, comfort, strength, mind and soul expansion, in contemplation of the subject of angels, their nearness, their interest and cooperation in our human affairs.

R. E. Golladay

Opportunities and Problems

As we enter our third decade as an arm of the AFLC I would like to share some personal opinions regarding the possibilities, opportunities and problems for the future of our Women's Missionary Federation.

The opportunities to serve as women of our church are greater than ever before. Often the word "missions" sends our thoughts right away to foreign lands. Remember, in Acts 1:8, where Jesus was telling his disciples that when they received the Holy Spirit they would begin their witness right there in Jerusalem. Our mission must begin right at home and in our own community. And, my, what a mission field we have there.

I have spent a little time going through our annual conference program booklets and although we can't necessarily use figures to measure our growth in our day of inflation it is interesting and a real joy to note that 20 years ago we began with a budget of

\$5,000.00 and now at the ending of our fiscal year we have exceeded a budget of \$57,000.00. Surely we can praise and thank our God for the opportunities he has given us to serve in the capacity of helping provide funds for home and world missions as well as financial aid to our schools, etc. Uppermost, we always have the opportunity to pray. Not all of us have the money but as Christian women we have the wonderful privilege of communion with God in prayer. This is of vital importance to our missionaries and they always stress how important this is for them. News from the mission field in Brazil expresses the missionaries' joy in seeing the national pastors and lay workers

maturing and growing in their spiritual lives and taking over much of the responsibility in the national churches. As our missionaries are faithful in sowing the seed, God gives the increase.

We are grateful for the opportunities to be a part of the work in Mexico and India. The 1980 annual conference recommended that we make an effort to purchase property on which an orphanage could be built. Surely, as mothers and grandmothers our hearts are touched by the needs of little children. Our 1982 conference had a special offering toward this goal and it has been suggested that if each one of us would sell an item in our home (and we all have them) that is never used and give

but to be members of a group, to be involved in the Bible study, to take an office—they want no part of it. Maybe we need to send out a questionnaire and ask them "why?" Ask them what the WMF means to them and what is its purpose in our AFLC. We might not like some of the answers. Have we been guilty of grumbling and complaining in their presence as little children so they want no part of it. Do they see service as drudgery rather than joy? Galatians 5:22, 23 speaks of the fruits of the Spirit. Have we lacked in reaching out to our young women in love and concern for their spiritual lives so that service has become a demand rather than a desire? May each one of us who bear the name of Christian discipline our lives so that they might see joy in our service and want to become a part of it.

In closing I would stress the opportunities to serve right in your local group as well as on district or national levels. Each year we are confronted



that amount to this cause our orphanage could become a reality in the very near future. How about that!

Now some problems! I have often been asked the question, "How are we going to get our young women involved in the work of our WMF?" I know that in some of our congregations as much as half of women members of our congregation are not members of their local WMF. Yes, they are willing to help with food for funerals, weddings, etc.,

with the problem of getting women to fill the offices on each level. If God has called you, remember He isn't seeking trained leaders. He is seeking you who are willing to be used in the service of His kingdom here on earth, completely dependent on His grace and guidance to accomplish that which He has called you to do.

Remember when Jesus, in John 21:15, said to Simon Peter, "Do you love me? Feed my sheep." If we love Him we have that same opportunity, that responsibility, that mission as members of our Women's Missionary Federation.

Mrs. Grace Syverson, President

"If God has called you, remember He isn't seeking trained leaders. He is seeking you who are willing to be used . . ."

on children and baptism . . .

No church should pray more for its children than the church that has permitted children to become partakers of the grace of baptism. For infant baptism obligates to prayer. "Grant that the little ones who are baptized in Thy name may be brought up in Thy fear. Direct our youth in Thy ways."

But above all others it is the duty of the home to guard the child and to carry it in the arms of prayer. The very greatest privilege of any person is to grow up in a Christian home. "If all our mountains were of gold, what would that help if we did not have the Christian homes?" (Petra Fleischer.) No soldier in God's great army advances farther than a Christian mother. No one has stronger weapons than mother, for no one else loves as she does. And love is the strongest sword in the kingdom of God. It reaches the farthest and cuts the deepest. Foremost in the battle for the Kingdom of heaven stands an army of praying mothers. It is behind this advance guard that the rest of us fight. It may appear that we are taking the most booty, and yet in the end mother will receive the greatest victor's prize.

In the next place, it is the duty of sponsors also to pray for the child. No one should be a sponsor for more children than he can constantly follow in his prayers. And he who does not pray has no right to be a sponsor. In choosing sponsors every Christian home should be more concerned to secure praying sponsors, than to get someone from among their relatives or friends. The right service of sponsors is a service of prayer. Being a sponsor entails more responsibility than honor.

But in a church of believers the number of sponsors is not three or four; the whole congregation is the child's sponsor; and in the midst of the congregation this prayer must never die: defend our homes. Bless our children. And the prayer that "they may abide in Christ, even as now through baptism they have been grafted into Him."

"Foremost in the battle for the kingdom of heaven stands an army of praying mothers."

from *I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT*
by Fredrik Wisløff



Eastern N. Dak. WMF Retreat announced

"Teach Us To Number Our Days" is the theme for the Eastern N.D. Women's Retreat at Red Willow Bible Camp, Binford, N.D. March 25-26.

Registration is from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. or anytime on Friday. There will be singing, talks, a banquet, skits and a special feature by Carol Winter entitled "Walk Through the Bible."

We encourage everyone to come and share.

Linda Mohagen, Sec.



Cumberland, Wis.

Section Ten Lutheran Church honored Mrs. Zoela Brown on her 90th birthday. Mrs. Brown is a charter member of the congregation.



Strathcona, Minn.

Mrs. Ralph Berg received her honorary membership pin from Poplar Grove Lutheran Church. Mrs. Cordell Wiskow presented the pin.

CAMPUS NEWS

Winter quarter at AFLBS

The winter quarter for 1982-83 is in progress and the enrollment is as strong as ever. The Senior class consists of 53 students while the Junior class claims 58 members. The students come from nine different states and three foreign countries. Our foreign students are natives of Guyana, Norway and Egypt. The majority of students, 46, are from Minnesota. The state that comes closest to that is North Dakota, which has sent 22 pupils. Other states which are represented are South Dakota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Washington, Oregon, Montana and Arizona. The parish that has sent the largest number is Thief River Falls, Minn., with seven students but is closely followed by McVille, N. Dak., Cloquet, Minn., and the Eben Junction, Mich., parishes, which each have six students at AFLBS.

Winter quarter is a very busy time at Bible school. One of the major activities students get involved in during December is the annual Parents' Day and Christmas concert. Parents' Day is an opportunity for AFLBS students to host their parents for a weekend of the Bible school. Classes for the parents were held Saturday morning. After class, the parents were invited to sit in on a joint Choral Club and Choir rehearsal and on Saturday evening the cooks prepared a delicious banquet meal. Following the meal, President Mark Schmitke gave each student a chance to introduce his parents to the rest of the group. The final activity of the day was the school play entitled, "What is the meaning of Christianity?" It was about an author who wanted to write a play about what it means to be a Christian today. It was cast and directed by Jonathan Unverzagt. He said, "I guess the best part of the play was performing for the parents, but more importantly, the fellowship we shared and the patience we learned as we worked with each other in the practices."

Under the direction of Donald

Rodvold, the Choral Club and Choir presented a Christmas concert on Sunday afternoon. The concert consisted of the Choral Club and Choir individually and jointly singing together as well as Gospel teams and the Seminary Choir. Variations in the concert included a cappella singing and piano and brass accompaniment. One highlight for the Choral Club and Choir was when some members of the audience joined them in singing the Hallelujah Chorus.

We are thankful for the 111 young people God has sent to Bible school. By His grace they will "grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Kary Sletten
Faith, S. Dak.



Miss Andrea Krueger, women's resident head, paused for a visit with Kenya Knutson, Ferndale, Wash.

Give the gift

We seem to be a people who tend to receive, to "take in." Through Christian concerts, seminars, church and even Bible school, we have become interested primarily in what we can do for ourselves. Although these events usually do good for the believer (some are necessary), we need to give for the advancement of the kingdom of God; we need to give ourselves.

Matthew 10:8 states: "Freely you received, freely give." As we realize what God has given us, the opportunity to be with Him in heaven through faith in Jesus, we know that this gift is undeserved.

We have received this gift freely. Although many times there is a sacrifice involved in the Christian walk, these sacrifices are beneficial and are the result of free choice. In our appreciation and as a part of receiving Christ we need to give. But what do we give?

"Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation." We need to give our most precious possession—Jesus. And when we give Jesus, we don't lose Him, but receive more of Him. In all we do, our

foremost intentions, thoughts and actions should be based on the spreading of the Gospel.

To be effective in the spreading of the Gospel we need to have Christ "number one" in our lives. So many times in my life I've looked at the sin habits I'm caught up in, things that have created a wall between God and me, and realized what little pleasure I had received from it, especially in light of what it is destroying. How worthless compared to what Jesus has planned for our lives!

We need to daily cleanse ourselves with Jesus' forgiveness and then we will have the right priorities, the right relationships with God. Then we will give of ourselves for the kingdom of God, not actions to obtain salvation, but actions freely given, as our salvation is only freely received.

Acts 20:35: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Romans 6:23: "... the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Michael Wagar
AFLBS student

news of the churches

Mission work begun in Canton, S. Dak.

The first worship service of the newest AFLC Home Mission congregation, with an attendance of more than 50 people, was held on Sunday, January 9, in Canton, South Dakota.

Rev. Elden Nelson, Home Mission Director, conducted the service and led a brief business meeting afterwards. The speaker was Rev. Robert Lee, who, together with Rev. Kenneth Moland, will provide weekend service at present.

Significant interest was expressed for a new congregation in Canton during a December informational meeting, which was held at the request of two families in the area with previous AFLC ties, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Swanson and Mr. and Mrs. Mike Coyle. A portion of a vacant commercial building on the west edge of town has been leased and will provide an adequate temporary home for the congregation.

Friends of Home Missions are encouraged to pray for Canton and to refer the names of any possible new contacts in the area to the headquarters office in Minneapolis.

Radcliffe, Iowa



On Sunday, Nov. 7, 1982, the Richard Eller family was received into membership in Salem Lutheran Church, Radcliffe, Ia. Pictured from right to left are Mr. and Mrs. (Judy) Eller, Matt and Lisa, and Pastor Donald Greven.

Personalities

Rev. Stephen Odegaard has resigned as pastor of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Kirkland, Wash., and will begin work in Spencer Creek Lutheran Church, rural Eugene, Ore., a congregation he previously served, in the latter part of March.

New address for Rev. Ralph Tjelta is 8352 W. 160th, Rosemount, Minn. 55068. His telephone number is 612/432-2319. The congregation he serves, Minnesota Valley Lutheran, meets for services at 16075 Highview Ave., Lakeville, Minn. 55044.

Annual Pastors Conference held

The annual Pastors' Conference of the AFLC was held Jan. 18-20 at the Association Retreat Center near Osceola, Wis. The attendance of some over 100 included, in addition to the pastors, many of the students in the church's seminary in Minneapolis, Minn., some visiting pastors, a few laymen and other guests.

Rev. Stephen Odegaard, Kirkland, Wash., spoke at the opening service of Holy Communion on Tuesday evening. Rev. Wendell Johnson, Stacy, Minn., chairman of the Coordinating Committee, was the liturgist.

The Bible Hours were conducted by Rev. David Barnhart, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls (LCA), Minneapolis. He taught studies in the Book of Nehemiah.

Guest lecturer for the conference was Dr. James Hamre, professor at Waldorf Jr. College, Forest City, Ia. He gave lectures on "Sverdrup's View of the Role of the Pastor" and "Free and Living Congregations Today." At the banquet on Wednesday evening he spoke on "The Reformer (Martin Luther) in His Youth." Rev. Leslie Galland, Thief River Falls, Minn., AFLC vice-president, was the master of ceremonies

With our evangelist-youth worker

The days are rapidly moving on toward Holy Week and Easter. Thoughts are directed toward Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. Hearts are more easily moved as one thinks of what Jesus has done for us. Pray for our evangelist, Rev. Kenneth Pentti, as he conducts these preaching missions.

Virginia, Minn.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Feb. 27-Mar. 3
Henry A. E. Johansen, pastor
Hampden, N. Dak.
Zoar Lutheran Church
Mar. 13-17
Ragene D. Hodnefield, pastor

Portland, N. Dak.

Valley Lutheran Church
Mar. 27-31
Pastoral vacancy

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.

NORTH DAKOTA

Minnewaukan
Carl R. Blegen, 86, Apr. 4, 1982, Trinity
Sanford B. Thompson, 76, Nov. 22, 1982, Trinity

Northwood

Mrs. Neomie Brye, 77, Jan. 10, Zoar, Hatton
(Mrs. Brye was a daughter of the pioneer pastor, B. I. Land)

Tioga

Mrs. Clifford (Arlene) Iverson, 49, Jan. 18, Zion
(Mrs. Iverson was a member of the well-known Zion Trio.)

at the banquet.

In two practical hours on Wednesday, Rev. Robert L. Lee of the AFLC Schools' faculty considered

Continued on p. 16

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Why do not Lutherans take part in union services with other churches?

(Ed. note: Dr. Hegland wrote this material well before the ecumenical involvements of some Lutheran church bodies in recent decades. The reader is reminded of that as he reads what follows and to make his judgements accordingly.)

The above question raises a point which is very troublesome to many young people. They say: "We worship the same God as members of other Christian churches; we are trying to advance the same noble purposes; we hope to reach the same heaven; why can we not worship together here? Isn't the Lutheran Church very narrow on this point?"

Now if you will have just a little patience, we shall look at this problem in all earnestness and try to discover and understand the reasons for the course which Lutherans pursue in this matter.

But before entering upon the main discussion, let me say that the leaders among Lutherans who in the past have helped to determine the course of the Church have been earnest and sincere Christians, zealous for the true progress of the kingdom of God. They should therefore be regarded with the highest respect by anyone interested in the cause of Christ and should be credited with the noblest motives in their procedures. We have no right to pass harsh judgements upon them or their course of action.

Now let us see what happens in a union service.

Out of courtesy for others, speakers must be careful, of course, not to mention matters concerning which the participating churches hold differing doctrinal views. These differences must be

passed over in silence; otherwise the spirit of the meeting is disturbed.

Well, you say, what harm does that do once in a while? There is this danger that such silence may lead to the thought that the differences are small and unimportant. But, isn't it true that the differences are insignificant? Well, let us see. Take baptism, for instance. Lutherans teach that baptism is a truly supernatural agency by means of which God actually gives spiritual life to the child baptized. The Reformed churches, generally speaking, regard baptism merely as a symbolic rite with no supernatural efficacy. Does that make any difference? The Lutheran and the Reformed systems are basically different from the ground up. In Christian nurture and instruction the Lutheran Church views baptized children as children of God to be reared into full citizenship in the Kingdom; the Reformed churches view their religious education objective as being that of bringing children to conversion. What a difference!

Then take the Lord's Supper. Lutherans hold that Christ is really present in the Sacrament, and that all who partake receive Him, both believers and unbelievers; the believers for blessing, the unbelievers for condemnation. The Reformed churches hold that there is no sacramental presence of Christ in the Supper and that unbelievers do not receive Him at all. Is not that a tremendous difference? The different practices in administering the Sacraments in the different churches show how large the basic difference really is.

"By declining to participate in union services Lutherans do not pass judgment on other church bodies as to the personal Christianity of their members."

Other differences might be mentioned, but for illustration purposes these are sufficient.

Now to ignore such doctrinal differences, or to regard them as insignificant, leads to one of the worst possible evils in the religious sphere, namely, doctrinal indifference. Doctrinal error is bad, but doctrinal indifference is far worse. A man who has doctrinal convictions is worthy of your respect, even if you believe him to be wrong, but a man who is doctrinally indifferent is religiously hopeless. He is like a ship without a rudder. There is nothing to tie to. There is no stamina in his religion. One thing to him is just about as good as any other, and the ultimate result, sooner or later, is abysmal scepticism in regard to all religious matters.

This then is a chief charge against unionism—that it tends towards doctrinal indifference and looseness. It may not come to that all at once, but the tendency is there, and if the practice is continued, doctrinal indifference with its train of evil consequences is almost sure to follow. In fact, it may practically be set down as a rule that persons who favor and practice unionism are more or less under the influence of doctrinal indifference.

In order to guard against misunderstandings, certain other things should be said.

By declining to participate in union services Lutherans do not pass judgment on other church bodies as to the personal Christianity of their members. We believe that there are Christians in all churches that proclaim enough of Christian truth so that a person may find the way of salvation through Christ. But to participate with them in union services may be interpreted as sanctioning those of their teachings in which we believe them to be in error, when we offer no testimony against those teachings.

It may further be said that the reasons which stand in the way of union services between Lutheran and Reformed churches are not equally valid in the case of some of the Reformed churches

LIFE . . .

as among themselves. They have much more in common—much smaller differences. In fact it is difficult to see how some of the Reformed churches can justify their remaining in separate organizations when one considers the small differences that divide them.

Finally, the objections to union services set forth in this discussion are applicable to such services as are of a distinctly religious and churchly character. They do not operate with force in the case of the many community and civic or semi-civic gatherings, such as Memorial day programs, school commencements, and the like. Nor do they hold in the case of community meetings in the interest of benevolent or reform movements such as Community Chests, Red Cross, Temperance, or other movements with a specific objective that does not essentially involve doctrine. In these forms of activity people participate rather as citizens than as church people. If that is the case, perhaps someone asks, why have religious exercises at all, such as invocations, in connection with such meetings? Have we not a separation of church and state in this country? Yes, we are definitely committed to the principle of separation of church and state; and, in the main, the idea is carried through in practice. But there are some instances in which the principle is not rigidly practised. Thus, there are chaplains in the military units of the nation. Political conventions, legislative assemblies, and other civic meetings are opened with prayer. And the American people seem to approve of such practice, even though, in a sense, it conflicts with the principle of separation of church and state.

Now, to charge people with unionism, because they participate in religious exercises in connection with such civic meetings, is to carry a principle which is good in itself to unjustifiable lengths.

To repeat what was said above, a definite distinction must be made between gatherings that are distinctly religious and churchly and such as are of a civic or semi-civic character or are held in the interests of general benevolent and reform movements. What is objectionable unionism in

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PASTOR'S . . .

"Fundamental Catechetical Instruction" in one and Rev. Philip Haugen "A Closer Look at Divorce and Remarriage" in the other. Considerable discussion of these issues took place in an open forum after the banquet that night.

The two prayer hours which opened each day's session were led by Rev. Gordon Grage, Brandon, Minn., and Rev. Mauritz Lundeen, Bagley, Minn.

The conference ended on Thursday morning with a worship service led by Rev. R. Snipstead, church president. The message was brought by Rev. Walter Johnson, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church (ALC), Shakopee, Minn. The Seminary Chorus, directed by Mr. Donald Rodvold, sang.

In the noon hour on Thursday there was a discussion of the church's pension and health insurance program.

A grant from Lutheran Brotherhood insurance society assisted with the costs of the conference.

the one case may not necessarily be so in the other. The enlightened conscience of the individual must be the judge in each case.

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

Next time: Can We Not Get Along
Without Doctrine?

SAVIOUR, BLESSED SAVIOUR

Saviour, blessed Saviour,
Listen while we sing,
Praises to our King;
All we have to offer,
All we hope to be,
Body, soul, and spirit,
All we yield to Thee.

Nearer, ever nearer,
Christ, we draw to Thee,
Deep in adoration
Bending low the knee.
Thou for our redemption
Cam'st on earth to die;
Thou, that we might follow,
Hast gone up on high.

Clearer still and clearer
Dawns the light from heaven,
In our sadness bringing
News of sins forgiven;
Life has lost its shadows,
Pure the light within;
Thou hast shed Thy radiance
On a world of sin.

Onward, ever onward,
Journeying o'er the road
Worn by saints before us,
Journeying on to God,
Leaving all behind us,
May we hasten on,
Backward never looking
Till the prize is won.

Higher then and higher
Bear the ransomed soul,
Earthly toils forgotten,
Savior, to its goal,
Where, in joys unthought of,
Saints with angels sing,
Never weary raising
Praises to their King.

Godfrey Thring
(*The Church Hymnary*)