

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

February 28, 1984



Street Scene,
Rothenburg, Germany
Roger C. Huebner, D.D.S.

AT THE MASTER'S FEET



Pastor Wallace Jackson

Soul Exposure

Daniel wrote while in exile. His legacy has brought unbounded blessing to his readers. His dramatic encounter with "Felis leo" in the den fixes our attention and admiration. Few realize the significance this book lends to prophecy; fewer still appreciate the devotional life of this outstanding man of God. The account is brief.

Daniel's meteoric rise from obscurity to a starring role in the Babylonian drama is a classic success story. By the world's standard he "made good;" by God's, he was phenomenal. His background, faith, integrity, character, charisma and charity combined in this one personality to provide God with quality representation in this Gentile kingdom.

THE WINDOWS OF THE SOUL. Because of his insubordination, Daniel becomes a wanted man. His

refusal to submit to the King's edict that only he should be petitioned, leads to quick arrest. He is summarily sentenced to be executed by fang and claw. What capital offence has he perpetrated against society that he should be consigned to be consumed by the great carnivores? Daniel simply continued to do what he had always done: worship God! His one-man resistance movement appears doomed before it begins. Only God's intervention saves his servant.

The "open windows" of our text catch our attention. Daniel's open windows faced Jerusalem. Thrice daily he would kneel before them and worship God. This is suggestive of God's people looking for a "city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God." This symbolizes faith, and faith must have expression if it is to survive and flourish. One wonders how many busy statesmen follow Daniel's lead in being willing to stand alone with God in a godless circumstance.

Of man's faculties, his soul seems least given to wilful exposure. The faculties of sight and sound are exposed by that which engages them. These are apparent. The soul remains secretive and private. It resents any invasion—even that of God. Understandably, we purpose to shield the soul from the "prying eyes" of our fellows. Too often, God is placed under the same censure and restriction.

RAISING THE WINDOWS. As with most things in life, the options rest with us. Daniel's windows were open. This should be no less our aspiration and desire. Ours must also face our spiritual "Jerusalem." Only so can our heart commune with God.

Daniel's choice to serve God began early on in youth. By the time

of his captivity he was well equipped to face his ordeal. His "book of life" details his rejected opportunities to "dine in class" at the King's table. Walking away from a table which groans under the weight of delicacies and delectable cuisine does not come easy—especially when banquet "compadres" represent nobility and royalty. We should be so lucky! Daniel, God's man of the hour, will not yield to this temptation even for the sake of convention. We should be so brave!

The option yet remains. Fortunately, no correlation exists between the limited number of balmy days those of us who live in the northern climes can enjoy the luxury of open windows and the unlimited number of days the soul can enjoy exposure to God. "Summer" can exist for the soul 365 days a year. Unfortunately, though the opportunity for communion with God belongs to all who hear the Gospel, many yet choose to remain spiritually frigid. They choose to keep the windows closed! This barricade places a severe limitation on God's Holy Spirit's access to the inner man. To add insult to injury, the "glass" which separates us from God becomes rain-splattered and dust-coated. It is badly in need of the "windex" treatment. Carelessness in our attitude toward sin causes us to "see through a glass darkly," even more darkly than we care to admit. The "Jerusalem" of our hope becomes obscured by that which "satisfieth not." I John 1:9 becomes our essential and immediate need. Best of all is when the windows are fully open and there is "nothing between my soul and the Savior." Would you "Dare to be a Daniel, Dare to stand alone! Dare to have a purpose firm! Dare to make it known?"

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Volume 22 Number 5

Not all who die are "blessed"

A message preached by Pastor
Herbert Franz, Cloquet, Minn.

"Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; *knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle*, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me" (II Peter 1:13-14).

Madame Curie's biography tells us that she was afraid of death. When death drew near, she fought against it. The doctors and loved ones tried to save her any distress of mind by not even mentioning the word "death." I ask you, did that keep it away? No, my friend, death came to her as it will to every one of us if the Lord should delay His coming.

Death is *torment* to the *unprepared*, for they have wasted all their lives on the things of earth which pass away. *Unsaved friend, believe it or not, there is a judgment awaiting you one day after death.* "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). The Lord Jesus who now wants to be your Savior will then become your Judge (Acts 17:30-31). Don't ever forget it! If you receive Christ as your Savior now, death will hold no fear for you because Christ has tasted eternal death for you (Romans 8:1). When the fear of death is removed, then man no longer fears what others can do to him. This certainly was true with the disciples after Christ's resurrection.

Peter did not fear death. When he said, "I must put off this my tabernacle," he was not referring to his soul but his *body*. Paul also speaks about this in II Corinthians 5. When death comes to the Christian, that person puts off his body like you would take off a suit of clothes. Paul had no thought of "soul sleep," and neither did Peter. The term "*soul sleep*" is what some teach, that when a man dies, his entire being (both soul and

DYING WITH FAITH IN CHRIST

body) go into the grave to await resurrection and he knows nothing at that time. I do *not* believe that this teaching is found in the Bible. We should never build a doctrine on just parts of verses.

Advocates of soul sleep use Ecclesiastes 9:5 as one proof: "The dead know not any thing." However in its context, the following verse refers to what is done "under the sun" or upon the earth. This verse has nothing to do with the idea of "soul sleep" of man. But this is the way most people look at life and death. Natural man cannot see beyond the grave and therefore he concludes that all of man dies and goes into the grave and remains there until the day of resurrection. But let's look at two other verses in the same book: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and *the spirit shall return unto God who gave it*" (12:7). "All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the *spirit of man that goeth upward*, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" (3:20-21). Only the spirit of man goes upward; animals do not because they have no soul. These verses indicate that a separation takes place at death; the soul leaves the body. The soul of the *saved* person goes back to the One who created him, and the body returns to dust from which man was created. The soul of the *unsaved* goes to Hades, the prisonhouse of departed spirits awaiting the resurrection of the dead. Remember, there is more to man than the breath of his body. When his breath is gone, it

doesn't mean that man has ceased to exist.

In I Thessalonians 4:13-18, we have the term "fallen asleep" used, but Paul qualifies this word here by declaring that it refers to the bodies of Christians who are awaiting resurrection to immortality (or physical incorruptibility). Paul says, in verse 14: "Even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring *with Him*." How can God bring back with Him someone who is in the grave if our entire being is buried when we die? In other words, at death, the Christian is brought home to be with the Lord, even though his body is in the earth. Then at the Second Coming of Christ, our souls (the real us) will return with our triumphant Savior (not rise from the grave from a state of unconsciousness) to be reunited with our resurrected, glorified bodies.

In Acts 7:50, we read that Stephen "fell asleep" in death and saw our Lord standing at the right hand of God, and he said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." In other words, he was saying, "Lord, receive *me*." In Luke 23:43, we read that Jesus told the dying thief on the cross: "Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise." The dying thief's body went back to earth, but his soul went to paradise. In Luke 8:40-56, we read of Jairus' daughter who had died. Jesus raised her from the dead and the spirit came back into her body which was dead on the bed. In I Kings 17:21, 22, Elijah prayed over a dead child, and "the soul of the child came into him again." In Matthew 17:3, we have the Mount of Transfiguration scene where Moses, Elijah and Jesus were there with the Apostles Peter, James and John. The bodies of Moses and Elijah were in the cemetery, but their real selves were on the mountain with Jesus and the others.

II Corinthians 5:8 tells us that "to be absent from the body" is to be "present with the Lord." We have no hint of soul sleep here. Paul teaches

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"When the fear of death is removed, then man no longer fears what others can do to him."

"If people ceased to exist when they died, why would Paul say, 'To die is gain'?"

DYING . . .

that when a person dies in Christ, his body goes into the grave but his soul enjoys conscious fellowship with Jesus Christ. Death does not touch the soul of man. For the Christian, death is a release rather than a hindrance. The body which is filled with decay is laid in the grave, but the *real person* goes home to be with Jesus!

Judson Palmer makes this observation concerning II Corinthians 5:1-4: "At the time of death, the Christian receives a glorified body. He will have the same features that he had here on earth, but they will be glorified. He believes that this glorified body will retain the form and features of the body which we had here upon earth. The rich man saw Lazarus and recognized him, so he must have had fingers and hands, or how could Lazarus be asked to dip the tip of his finger in water and come and cool the tongue of the rich man?"

If people ceased to exist when they died, why would Paul say, "To die is gain" (Philippians 1:21)? If death ends all, why would the Psalmist say, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15)? A Christian's death is precious because he (the real person) goes home to be with the Lord in heaven! John says, in Revelation 14:13: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord," but who are you going to believe—the world or the Word of God? I believe God, for it is impossible for Him to tell a lie. *For a Christian, death is not tragedy but promotion to glory!*

We have often heard people say (and I believe many say it without thinking): "It was a blessing that so and so could die." I ask you, is it a blessing for a person to die without faith in Jesus Christ? Is it a blessing for a person to go out into eternity

without hope of ever getting saved? They will be ushered into a place where they must die for their own sins. *God is my authority on this*, for He said: "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins, and whither I go, ye cannot come" (See John 8:21-24).

We dare not write "blessed" where God has not written it! We may place the body of an unbeliever in an expensive casket surrounded by beautiful flowers and soft music and say he's at rest, but none of these things can take away the sting of death nor ease the suffering of a person in eternity who has died without faith in Christ. When are we going to learn that we cannot place anyone in heaven whom God has not placed there?

Are you ready to die? Not everyone is blessed who dies. No, only those who die *in the Lord* are blessed (Revelation 14:13). To "die in the Lord" means we must first of all die *with Christ* at the cross by repenting of our sins. I must die to sin. It also means that Christ is in our hearts and that we have lived for Him before we die, whether that be many years, months or days. Death does not change the law of the harvest. "As a tree falls, so it will lie." We plant oats and we reap the same. We must choose before we die what we will do with Jesus Christ (John 14:6, John 1:12, Revelation 3:20, I John 5:10-13). Eternity is just a continuation of the choices each person makes in this life.

Whom do you choose? Is Jesus your personal Savior? Are you living for Him? God would never have allowed His only Son to suffer and die on the cross if there was some other way to be saved. Jesus is the *only way* to heaven, and He is preparing a home for His children in heaven. Is this your assurance today?

"Not everyone is blessed who dies. No, only those who die in the Lord are blessed."

PRAYER

by Bernard W. Nelson, Atlantic Mine, Mich.

(The fifth of ten parts)

4. Pray with Faith Believing

My Bible says, in Mark 11:24: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." In Luke 22:32, Jesus says: "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."

Prayer cannot draw down answers from God's throne except it be the earnest prayer of the person who *believes*.

Faith is the telegraphic wire which links earth to heaven on which God's messages of love fly so fast that before we call He answers, and while we are yet speaking He hears us. But if that telegraphic wire of faith be snapped, how can we obtain the promise?

Am I in trouble? I can obtain help for trouble by faith. Am I beaten about the enemy? My soul on her dear Refuge leans by faith. But take faith away, then in vain I call to God. There is no other road betwixt my soul and heaven. Blockade the road and how can I communicate with the great King?

Faith links me with Divinity. Faith clothes me with the power of Jehovah. Faith insures every attribute of God in my defense. It helps me defy the hosts of hell. But without faith, how can I receive anything from the Lord? In Hebrews 11:6, it says: "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

The other day I was watching "100 Huntley St." on TV. David Mainse was interviewing an Anglican priest from England and he made the statement that we should "pray within our faith." Mr. Mainse then asked him to explain. He proceeded to say that

some newcomers moved into a house next door to a Christian family. The Christian family was somewhat shy and not too outgoing, but the Christian man would pray daily for his neighbors' salvation. Some months went by without any contact with the neighbor or any evidence that he was a Christian. Finally, one day as the Christian man was praying, God seemed to speak to him and say, "You don't really believe that your neighbor can be saved, do you? Why don't you pray that you would have an opportunity to speak to him as a friendly neighbor?" So he prayed for that opportunity. Within a week he was able to have a conversation across the back fence. Then he prayed, "Lord, let me be able to help him in some manner. And shortly thereafter the neighbor needed a small tool, so he was able to help. Next he prayed that he would be invited into his home to visit over a cup of tea with the family. In a short time this prayer, too, was answered. Later he prayed that he would be able to invite him to his church. This prayer was answered and within a year the whole family had accepted

Jesus as their Savior. How is our faith? Maybe we need to "pray within our faith."

Jesus said, in Mark 9:23: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

Faith is a wonderful key to every situation where we come to God in prayer. It is the key that opens God's storehouse. God's storehouse is filled, shelf after shelf, clear to the top with good things that men and women need. On the shelves of God's storehouse there are salvation, a born-again experience, and victory over the world, the flesh and the devil. On the shelf of God's storehouse there is divine healing or grace to bear our burdens, there is blessing, there is deliverance from sin and guilt, as well as peace for soul and spirit. On God's shelves is a rich spiritual experience; there is joy unspeakable and full of glory, hope, peace, blessings and answers to prayer.

Every man, woman and child may have the key of faith to God's storehouse put in his hand that he may turn the lock of prayer and swing wide the portals.

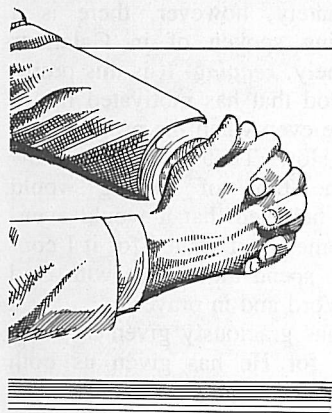
Faith moves mountains. Have you a mountain to move? Have you a mountain of heartache, despair, discontent, discouragement or failure? Faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God can move it. Faith in the precious blood that flowed from the wounded side of Immanuel can cleanse the heart and make it whiter than snow.

Is there a mountain of unbelief? The Lord can move that mountain. You cannot move it with all the power of your reasoning, nor even with your vain imagination. What you need is just a little spark of faith down in your heart and it will move the mountain.

The Lord does answer prayer. Use the key He has placed in your hand. Have faith in God. You can look upon those shelves in His storehouse and claim any number of the fruits He has stored thereon.

Someone has said, "Faith honors God; God honors faith." There is a verse in Luke, 17:5, that says: "Lord, increase our faith." May that be our prayer daily. Oh, how we need more faith."

(To be continued)



Pray for one another

Alfred W. Koehler

We owe it to one another to pray for one another. It is our secret support. You do well when you have near the top of your prayer list the name of your pastor, and the pastor does well if he has his members the objects of his prayers. There is nothing to make for a better spirit and feeling between pastors and people; there is nothing that will aid the effectiveness of the ministry of the Word in greater degree than the approach by means of prayer.

GOD'S ENCOURAGEMENT FOR HOME MISSIONS

"Don't be surprised if the work goes slow." This is the advice that Pastor John Strand gave me before we moved to Bismarck, N. Dak., five years ago to commence this Home Mission work.

A few weeks later I discovered that Pastor Strand's advice to me had proved to be most excellent advice. Pastor Strand was not speaking pessimistically but realistically when he made that statement. Being I started this work with only one couple it was almost inevitable that things would move slowly. Pastor Strand's advice helped prepare me for the slow progress that I was to see.

My having read of slow progress in other mission work also served as a reminder for me to be patient. For example, Jonathan Goforth had to wait six years for a door to open into the Chinese city of Changte. He said that that city seemed the most determined to keep out the missionary. Again and again when Goforth and a colleague visited the city they were mobbed and threatened by the hostile inhabitants. But finally the day of opportunity came. On his way to that city one day Goforth prayed to God to open the hearts of the people. Within three days after arriving in Changte, Goforth had 35 offers of property and was able to secure the piece of land most ideal for his mission work. Such accounts of doors opening slowly but surely have been an encouragement to me.

But God gave me special encouragement for my work through Galatians 6:9: "And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." It came at just the right time. After struggling

for two months to get this work commenced, I had a Sunday with only two people plus my family present (excluding the outsiders who came for the baptism). The encouragement that I then needed came through an article in our *Ambassador*. It was written by Pastor Herbert Franz on Galatians 6:9. That inspiring article inspired me to continue my Home Mission work believing that in due season there would come a reaping.

In Galatians 6:9 there are three things that stand out. The first one is a *doing*. We are exhorted not to be weary in *well doing*. Home Mission work calls for continual doing. My first doing for our Bismarck work was door-to-door visitation. On a day when the temperature hovered around the 100° mark three of my sons and I devoted many hours going from door-to-door telling about our new work. Nowadays a few of our members assist me each week in visiting new residents.

My second significant *doing* here was the starting of a Bible study in our home. At our first meeting only two ladies came in addition to my family. Our Catholic neighbor family had at first expressed interest, but in the meantime had decided not to come for fear of confusing their children with some different teachings.

The third *doing* I carried out was a worship service and a Sunday School. These we held in a basement room of the YMCA for a year. Then God enabled us to purchase the Jehovah's Witnesses' building with a loan from our Home Mission Board. Thus we finally became identified as a church in our *doing* of Home Mission work.

A second thing referred to in Galatians 6:9 is that of *testing*. This verse warns of testings to come, for it says: "If we faint not (do not lose heart)."

There is the testing of seeing slow growth. When one starts almost from scratch, few are the brave people who are willing to commit themselves to such an uncertain future. Many have said, upon seeing our small group, "We want a larger church." I asked a lady, who was church-hunting, what things she is looking for in a church. At the top of her list were: "young couples our age for fellowship, children our son's age, and a *variety* of Bible studies." Surely a beginning Home Mission work cannot begin to fulfill such great expectations.

Another testing that we face is the opposition from established churches. A lady who joined our church had previously asked the pastor of another Lutheran group what he knew about the AFLC. His reply was, "The Free Lutheran is legalistic, pietistic, neglects the Gospel, and emphasizes only the Christian life." Unfortunately, many people tend to believe such misinformation and thus refuse to even consider visiting a Free Lutheran Mission. Yes, many testings do come.

Fortunately, however, there is a third thing spoken of in Galatians 6:9, namely, *reaping*. It is this promise of God that has motivated me to persevere even when the progress has been so slow. Though I didn't know when the time of reaping would come, I believed that it would eventually come. As I waited for it I continued to spend much time with God in His Word and in prayer.

God has graciously given us some reaping, for He has given us both numerical and spiritual growth. We now have 51 resident baptized members, several of whom have come to know Christ as their Savior through this mission work. Several former Catholics are in our congregation, having, like Luther, come to a personal experience of justification by faith in Christ alone. About 35 people show their hunger for God's Word by coming to midweek Bible study.

(continued on p. 8)

*"And let us not
be weary in
well doing: for
in due season we
shall reap, if we
faint not."*



(For the Leader) Make an acrostic the basis of a stewardship talk or sermon for the children or young people. Print the acrostic in outline in the church calendar the Sunday you use it. Provide pencils for the audience to use in filling it out. Explain clearly and apply the meaning of each word; use Bible verses to enforce your teachings. The following is offered as an example:

THE STORY

Tom burst into Bob's room at college one day with a wild whoopee, "What's up? What are you doing?" Bob stopped tying up a package and looking up with a smile said, "Guess!" "Haven't the slightest notion," said Tom. "Looks like a birthday present." "Bully for you!" cried Bob. "Who told you?" "No one; I didn't know it, Bob. Whose is it?" "Mother's," said Bob, "and I am sending her a bit of a gift. I must get it right off or it won't get to her in time."

Tom became suddenly quiet and as Bob resumed his job of getting his package ready, he said, "Do you know, I never buy anything for my mother. She taught me to spend very carefully and to put in my savings account all I could. I never seem to have any money I ought to use for presents."

"Tom," said Bob, "I think it is just right to *spend* our income with care. My mother taught me that, too. And we ought to *save* something out of our allowance and earnings, but Mother said to me once, 'Bob, I do not want you to be a spendthrift but neither do I want you to be miserly.' She taught me a verse of Scripture which I have never forgotten. 'There is that scattereth and yet increaseth and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.' Did you ever learn it, Tom?"

"I never did, and do you know I have kind of a strange feeling in my heart as I watch you tie up that present for your mother. I wonder if I am a bit of a tightwad!"

S ervice. Romans 12:1-11

T alent. I Peter 4:10

E nergy. John 17:5

W illingness. I Corinthians 9:17

A bility. I Peter 4:11

R ighteousness. Philippians 1:10-11

D ays. Psalm 90:12

S ilver. Psalm 24:1; Haggai 2:8

H umility. Acts 20:19

I nfluence. Deuteronomy 6:5-9;
Romans 14:7-8

P rayer. II Corinthians 1:11

Invite the group to construct original acrostics on stewardship. Help

"Nonsense," said Bob, and putting down his package, he took Tom by the shoulders and smilingly looked in his frank blue eyes. "The trouble is you have not been using your old bean—your *intellect*, I mean. Let me tell you something, Tom. I have been wanting to talk to you about it for some time. My folks are great believers in '*stewardship*.'"

"Stewardship—what's that?" asked Tom.

"Hold your horses a moment and I'll tell you. This idea of stewardship has made my religion very real to me. You see, my father believes he is in a sort of *partnership* with God in the *earning* of his money as well as in the using of it in his business. And he taught me to believe that everything I am and I have belongs to God and that I must manage it all for Him and carefully account for all I have. This means that I was taught to *ration* out my income—apportion it—so as to make it cover as far as I could everything that I wanted to do that I ought to do. Do you know, Tom, I really believe this budget business has *helped* me to play more fair with God and myself and my loved ones than any other thing I ever did. Real *wealth* is not hoarded bank accounts but all those things that give life its joy and truest satisfaction—friendship, love, service of a cause, culture and spiritual living.

your group to fill in suitable Scripture references for the following or some simple form:

S pending
T ime
E arning
W ealth
A ccounting
R ationing
D ividing
S aving
H elping
I ntellect
P artners

Offer a prize for the best story using as many of the terms of the acrostic as possible. Tell them, as a sample, the following story based on the above.)

So my father taught me to schedule my time, *divide* the day up as well as to budget my money so as to get out of my time and my money the maximum of these true riches. Tom! you ought to make your money do more for you. Why don't you begin a budget?"

"Bob, you've made me see something today which I never thought of before. I'm not going to allow myself to develop into a mere miser. I wouldn't know a budget from a bushel basket if I met one, but I'm coming around tonight and get you to help me start on this rationing business—this budget-making. Will you help me?"

"Surest thing, old chap! I'll be a 'Johnny-on-the-spot.'"

(Where the age conditions warrant it, conduct a contest in acrostic verification. The following by Frank V. Lucas of Honolulu, Hawaii, is a splendid sample.)

"Thriftiness and Righteousness"

T hrift in saving, spending, living,
H elping others by your giving,
R eaching out and ever trying
I n your selling and your buying
F riends to make, will prove no less

T hat thriftiness is righteousness!

—Guy L. Morrill,
Stewardship Stories, Harper
and Brothers Publishers

Baptism involves responsibilities for parish, parents, and sponsors

by Dale E. Griffin

Through long usage once meaningful customs can become thoughtless ceremonies or acquire a significance not originally intended. Thus we spend national holidays in recreation or catching up on household tasks without thinking about the original purpose.

Baptism can be like that. Parents may have a child baptized to please relatives or because they vaguely feel it is the right thing.

Churches may become accomplices in this thoughtless, or even sacreligious, practice by administering baptism in a routine manner. Perhaps this explains why more people are baptized than confirmed in our churches.

We need to recapture the twin truths that in baptism we become united with Christ to live a radically new life, and that in this sacrament we are baptized by one Spirit into the fellowship of the church (Rom. 6:3-11, I Cor. 12:13).

To support and nourish this new

life which we enter through baptism, the Holy Spirit would continue to come to us through Word and Sacrament. . . .

Hence, our rite for holy baptism not only emphasizes the responsibility of the child's family but also the congregation's responsibility to provide for the child's continued instruction in the Christian faith.

As we seek to minister more faithfully to God's people, we can recapture the significance of baptism for Christian education in several ways.

- We can restore the significance of sponsors whose responsibility is to support the Christian education of their godchild. Parents can be encouraged to carefully select sponsors who will take seriously their Christian responsibility.

Prior to administration of baptism, parents and sponsors might be instructed together in the responsibilities they incur by bringing the child to baptism.

- Through occasional sermons and other means, the entire congregation

ought to be instructed in its responsibilities to every child brought to baptism in the church.

- Efforts ought to strengthen our Christian education agencies so they can support parents in the Christian education of the young.

- Adults, too, need strong programs of Christian education to help them in their own spiritual growth and to equip them to minister better to children, youth, and other members.

- In a day when we tend to be impressed by large numbers, we need to regain a sense of responsibility for every person as an individual.

Rather than impose programs that may or may not meet people's needs, perhaps we should know and listen to our fellow Christians. Together we can devise ways to grow in Jesus and to reach out to the lost.

Rev. Dale E. Griffin is secretary of Sunday, weekday, and summer schools with the Board for Parish Services, LCMS.

—Reporter, Oct. 31, 1983

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

... be thou
faithful
unto death
and
I will give
thee a
crown
of life.

Rev. 2:10b

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MISSIONS . . .

Another reaping that God has given is a real spirit of unity. Though our people came from diverse backgrounds, they have grown together into a spiritual family. Recently this unity was wonderfully demonstrated when a fine Christian man, only 26 years of age, was killed on January 3rd. Just five months earlier he and our church pianist had been joined together in marriage. Now sudden death had parted this happily married couple. And all of our members were stunned by this, the first death in our congregation. How good it was to see our entire congregation express as a family its heartfelt concern for the members of the three families that were bereaved of their loved one. On the day after the funeral I invited our people to come to the altar at the end of the service for

commitment or recommitment to Christ, if they felt so led. Fifteen people came forward immediately as God's Holy Spirit worked in a way that I have seldom witnessed. Hearts were tender before God and were united with one another. God has thus given reaping in a way that I never expected and surely never desired.

Yes, Pastor Strand was right—the work has gone slowly. But God has been encouraging me in this Home Mission work through His promise in Galatians 6:9. As we continue our doing amidst the frequent testings, God is giving the reaping. Thanks to God and to all praying, giving members of our AFLC we now have a free and living Lutheran congregation in the capital city of North Dakota.

—Pastor Einar Unseth
Bismarck, N. Dak.

editorials

MAY WE CLARIFY

While our attitude continues the same relative to the general subject of diplomatic relations with the Vatican City in Rome, there is something we should clarify concerning our editorial on the subject in our January 31 issue ("The Vatican Ambassador," page 10). And we want to do that before our sharper-eyed readers descend on us with correction.

We were speaking in terms used in daily newspapers when we wrote about the naming of a U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, but had forgotten that the U.S. Senate had earlier, much earlier, voted overwhelmingly, maybe unanimously, to approve diplomatic relations with the Vatican City State, a domain, if you can believe it, of less than a quarter of land (less than 160 acres). So that action had already been taken and that had slipped our mind.

The Senate will still vote to confirm or reject the man nominated by President Reagan to be ambassador. They could reject the ambassador-designate but that is unlikely in light of the great endorsement given to establishing full diplomatic relations with the Vatican. In other words, we won't hold our breath in anticipation of a no vote.

We are sorry this step is being taken. It is unnecessary and unwise. We deplore it.

WASH OUT YOUR MOUTH

It was gratifying to a point to read Christopher Porterfield's article, "America: Wash Out Your Mouth," in *Family Weekly*, for January 29.

Not motivated by Christian principles—he believes there is a time and place for some swearing and he feels that a lot of today's swearing is "dull and ugly"—Mr. Porterfield is rather amazed at the prevalence of profanity and four-letter words in America today.

He cites language used in books, on TV, in greeting cards, on T-shirts, in movies and the theater, and in videocassettes. He states that rough and foul talk are no longer to be heard only at the expected places but in the unexpected. And what was once a "preponderantly male trait" is being taken over by ladies, too. Thanks, he says, "in part to the women's movement." "It is not unusual," says Mr. Porterfield, "to hear a well-groomed female attending a business meeting or a cocktail party let loose with language that, in days of yore, would have made a longshoreman blush."

Christians, too, feel the pressures. They cannot turn on their TV sets without hearing crude, suggestive talk and misuse of the Lord's name. This is in their own homes. In shop, factory, office, locker room, the very air is singed with profanity and foul speech. Some Christians while wanting to avoid using outright profanity and general swear words do use slang which is dangerously close to what they would never want to say outright. But the

witness isn't good. There is a fear of being too separate from the world in speech, but better to be on the side of carefulness.

It is scary to think what will happen to speech in the next ten years when one considers how the barriers have been let down in the last ten in our public media. The situation is not going to get better unless enough people will hark back to the Ten Commandments of the Lord God.

PASTOR O. J. HAUKENESS

I should like to say some personal things about Pastor O. J. Haukeness, who passed away on January 24 in Everett, Wash., at age 95.

He was a relative, a second cousin of my paternal grandmother. But since no members of my father's immediate family came to America, he was more like an uncle to me on that side of the family. When our family visited in their home or they in ours, it was always a happy time for us children.

Pastor Haukeness and my father were raised on the same small island on the west coast of Norway. As boys, almost a year and a half apart in age, they must have climbed Varden, Saato, Hønsbearhaug and other high points on the island together. From some or all of them they could see the Hardangerfjord, the Følgefonn Glacier, the sea pathways to Bergen and Stavanger, the larger islands of Stord and Tysnes, as well as their homes in the settlement of Nordhuglo. Together they must have swum the ocean waters and rowed and fished and sailed.

They both came to America and eventually became pastors in the Lutheran Free Church (quickly I can name at least eight men who became pastors in the U.S. who came from Stord county, which included my father's island). They made some of the same stops in this country, even though they may have been at different times: Bethania College in Everett, Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis. They shared a big part of the hard Depression years as home mission pastors in Saskatchewan. I wish I could put my hands on a letter which tells of the miles Pastor Haukeness walked one winter Sunday up there to conduct services. It was perhaps 15 or 20 miles. When my father died while pastor at Westby, Mont., Pastor Haukeness came to succeed him.

Some time during my college and seminary days Pastor Haukeness came to work at Messenger Press for a while, where I was also helping to work my way through school. There we had many opportunities to converse and I learned to know him man to man.

Something of a scholar, he did something which few Lutheran pastors even attempt. He read from his Greek New Testament almost every day. Perhaps he was able to keep up that practice nearly to the end.

Pastor Haukeness was one of those men who never

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editorial . . .

really retired. At age 75 he drove the roads and long distances I had covered in my twenties, in the one parish we had in common, in eastern Montana. And when he left there he would have taken another call if it had been forthcoming! Since that didn't come about he retired with his good wife Ella in Everett, where both worked at Bethany Home for many years, he as a chaplain's assistant. Maybe he did some of that to the last. Former members at Calvary in Everett, they continued to visit that church from time to time.

Well, a chapter closes. A ministry faithfully carried out has ended. God bless your memory, Uncle Ole.

—Raynard Huglen

A GOOD BOOK

In that first parish mentioned above, an earnest young couple in one of the congregations had been given a book on theology as a gift. The title and author slip us now. They had made an attempt to read the book but it was awfully tough going and we don't know if they ever completed the reading of the words.

Some books on theology are like that. They are understandable by one out of a thousand and then we stretch it quite a bit. It is no use for the average person to even pick them up. Most pastors find them heavy going.

Strange, isn't it, that while the meaning of much of the Bible can be understood by a person with little education the message can be obfuscated (try that one on) or confused when it passes through some "learned" men or women?

This is the long way around of getting to our point. A very fine book is available in English to you and us, a book of theology, but one which we can read and comprehend. We refer to the book Pastor Karl Stendal has translated, *I Know in Whom I Believe*, by Carl Fredrik Wisløff of Norway.

The book is being used in our Bible School and Seminary. It is a better textbook for Bible School than for the Seminary, but it's an invaluable tool for any pastor to have and use. It has the simplicity of the Explanation of the Catechism, although it is in expanded form. It isn't an exhaustive study of doctrine, of course (how can it be, at 147 pages?), but it is an excellent summary of the subject.

Here is a book you can take and read, comprehend and enjoy. Maybe you've never read any theology before outside of the Explanation. Now you can do so and with profit. You can read about the Bible and Revelation, Inspiration, Bible teachings about God, the Fall into sin, Jesus and Salvation, Law and Gospel, Conversion, Sanctification, the Means of Grace, the Christian Church and Last Things (Eschatology).

Even in such a good book as Dr. Wisløff's, you may find things that you wonder about and concerning which you will want to seek further information. What a good opportunity to speak to your pastor about that question, or one of our Schools' faculty members when you see him.

We give *I Know in Whom I Believe* an enthusiastic endorsement. Secure a copy and read it. By the way, its length, 147 pages, will not make it formidable from that standpoint either.

INTERESTING NEWS

Allow me something further of a personal nature.

It was interesting to hear that Rev. E. M. Bremer, retired American Lutheran Church pastor, is serving our congregation in Kirkland, Wash., until the new pastor, Kenneth D. Moland, comes next summer.

While I haven't seen him since I was a boy his annual newsy and descriptive Christmas letters have come to our home since then. This is how it was. My father and Pastor Bremer, the latter fresh out of seminary, were Lutheran pastors living in the small town of Westby, Mont., astride the North Dakota line and 12 miles from Canada.

My father passed away at a relatively young age and Pastor Bremer, although of a different synod, ministered to my mother and our family in a loving and caring way. He came over that very evening to have devotions and he made other calls in the months that followed. We have just had great affection for this pastor for his ministry to us even though our contact in the intervening years has been largely through the exchange of Christmas greetings.

Father's funeral in Westby was held in Pastor Bremer's church, First Lutheran, as the LFC parish had no church in town and none very large. Furthermore, because it was now difficult for us to get out in the country, I began to attend the Sunday School at First Lutheran and also went to two Vacation Bible Schools there while we still lived in the community.

Now it is interesting to hear that Pastor Bremer is helping out one of our congregations in a time of need. The Lord bless you, Pastor and Mrs. Bremer.

In a reciprocation of sorts, our Pastor Howard Kjos of Roslyn, S. Dak., a place about which I know something, is serving as vacancy pastor for the ALC congregations of that community, Roslyn and Fron. Pastor Kjos is well known there having remained in the area after serving the AFLC parish, Lake Region.

—Raynard Huglen

1984 CHORAL CLUB ITINERARY

- April 11, Wednesday—Cloquet, MN
- 12, Thursday—Wadena, MN
- 13, Friday—Osakis, MN
- 14, Saturday—Dalton, MN
- 15, Sunday, #1-A.M.—Abercrombie, ND
- #2-A.M.—McLeod, ND
- #3-P.M.—Canton, SD
- 16, Monday—Pukwana, SD
- 17, Tuesday—Open
- 18, Wednesday—Faith, SD
- 19, Thursday—Wilmar, MN

May 13, Sunday—AFLBS



Letters to the editor

IN RESPONSE TO "WHO CARES?" (Jan. 17)

We are thankful to God that Pastor -- accepted a call to our congregation a few years ago. He was an answer to our prayers. He enjoys living in a small town; his home is small enough so his wife can enjoy the duties of pastor's wife; the *welcome* mat is always out to visitors. Pastor's standards are only to impress one person, that being his Savior. That his parishioners love their Lord above all others is of foremost importance to him. We hear the Word of God every Sunday; we care that God cares for us.

We do not give and give and give to line Pastor's pockets. He tells us he's one of the richest men on earth, thanks be to God who supplies all his needs. We give him love, trust and understanding. No, we're not perfect, but we do care about his needs. We don't fuss about improvements. God handled that when we had plans to build on to the parsonage, but a late fall blizzard arrived so plans were

postponed until weather permits.

Praise be to God that Pastor -- speaks the Word faithfully each Sunday, at weekly Bible studies and on countless special occasions. We care about his needs; he's special to each one of us. Intercessory prayer is part of his calling and we've witnessed the results in our parish, which proves he cares.

Yes, we live in a world of confusion and sin, but we as believers must show we care for others. Let's get busy and witness about God's love and concern for the lost. Let us show by our words and actions that we truly care. Let us be doers of the Word and not hearers only. When God knows we care, then it will show our pastors we care and share.

Name Withheld

(Ed. note: These aren't letters to the editor, but are expressions which have come to the business office. We don't often print such, but present these two as somewhat typical of words of encouragement which come to us from time to time. We are grateful for them.)

LIKES THE CHRISTMAS EDITIONS

We have enjoyed very much reading the paper every time we find it in our mail box, especially the Christmas editions. They are so special and interesting to read. I so often think of the Bible School and Seminary out at Medicine Lake and I think of the part that we had in building the first buildings out there with the Hauge Federation Innermission Society. And the many times we were so spiritually blessed in the meetings that were held out there; then came the time when the buildings were turned over to the AFLC and many blessed times we've had coming out to the Schools for the many activities that have been held. May God bless the Schools, the staff and the students.

Continue to hold up the truth as you teach and preach the Word of

God, Law and Gospel, sin and grace, remembering that the Word of God shall not return void. Continue in the work that God intended for it.

Again, thanks for past blessings and thanks again to you all for the efforts put forth in printing the paper.

N. and E. B. Berger
Minneapolis, Minn.

APPRECIATES THE BIBLE STUDIES

Always enjoy reading the paper. Many names are familiar, too, as I am a former Lutheran Free Church member.

Am so blest by the WMF Bible studies and go through them.

I thank God for the family of God and every effort to bring the lost into the fold, true to the Word.

Miss Othelia Lee
Seattle, Wash.

Father of Heaven, Whose Love Profound

Father of heaven, whose
love profound
A ransom for our souls has
found,
Before Thy throne we
sinners bend;
To us Thy pard'ning love
extend.

Almighty Son, incarnate
Word,
Our Prophet, Priest,
Redeemer, Lord,
Before Thy throne we
sinners bend;
To us Thy saving grace
extend.

Eternal Spirit, by whose
breath,
The soul is raised from sin
and death,
Before Thy throne we
sinners bend;
To us Thy quick'ning power
extend.

Jehovah! Father, Spirit, Son!
Eternal Godhead, Three in
One!
Before Thy throne we
sinners bend;
Grace, pardon, life to us
extend.

Author Unknown
(The Church and Sunday
School Hymnal)

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

On the dark background of Israel's unfaithfulness and apostasy shines forth this sublime prophecy. There were heroes of faith in those days. On eagle's wings they were lifted up above the seemingly hopeless present to see the future radiant with the glorious light of God's love. Such are taken into the eternal council of God and given to utter words the full meaning of which eternity alone will reveal.

God Himself must have held the pen when the prophet wrote these words. These things could never be the product of a person's own brain, fertile as it might be. Truly Peter knew whereof he spake when he said, "for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21).

This one verse challenges all the arguments of those who contend that the Old Testament is merely the product of man's mind in his search after God. Why is it that the prophets of Israel had such lofty ideas about God, that their theological concepts reached such unscaled heights? Humanly speaking, the great philosophers of ancient Greece, who were somewhat contemporary with the prophets of Israel, should have been able to tell us more about God. But they move in the dim region of error and even superstition, while the prophets bring us face to face with the living God.

Exultantly the words flow from the lips of the prophet, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." The full significance of this was perhaps not clear to the prophet. But we see here the Incarnation foretold. God and man united in one person. Heaven and earth brought together. "I believe that Jesus Christ is true God begotten of the Father from

THE PRINCE OF PEACE

by Rev. Sverre Torgerson, 1890-1984

eternity. I also believe that He is true man born of the Virgin Mary because 'God so loved the world that *He gave His only begotten Son.*' "

For a long time it has been popular to deny this. They have "humanized" our Savior until there is nothing left but the graveclothes and napkin found in Joseph's tomb.

"We cannot understand," they say, "that God could become man." No, we cannot understand! But the way to clear up a mystery is not to deny it.

God, give us the rugged faith of the prophets! They did not understand. They believed, and every fiber of their being was filled with a conviction that made them strong and bold and fearless.

It takes divine shoulders to carry the burdens of the government of the world. The strongest human shoulders would break under it. Only he who will be the incarnation of the devil shall attempt that which properly belongs to the Son of God.

Faith knows that the last word in government has not been spoken either by a Stalin, a Hitler, or a Mussolini. For "Behold a King shall reign in righteousness" (Isaiah 32:2). "I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Revelation 19:6).

"God Himself must have held the pen when the prophet wrote these words."

Although the complete fulfilment of this is still in the future, we can say with the people of God in the past, "God is our refuge, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof" (Psalm 46:1-2).

"And his name shall be called Wonderful." Wonderful He was in His birth, in His life, in His death, in His resurrection. Wonderful He is in His exaltation. Wonderful He is in His love for sinners. The wonder of His name shall never cease even when in heaven His ransomed children shall see Him face to face.

"Counsellor"—"in him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). "I am the Light of the World: whosoever followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life" (John 8:12). What if our leaders would seek His counsel in trying to lead us out of the present chaos. Think what it would mean if nations began to practice what He counselled, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal."

"Love one another."

Impracticable, they say. How do they know? They have never tried to practice it.

And you who struggle with the many problems of your own life, seek counsel with Him. Is it not written, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him"? (James 1:5). In the light of His truth the things of life will be properly proportioned and co-ordinated.

"The Mighty God"—daring words these to use about one who was born of a woman. But did He not Himself say, "I and the Father are one," and by His mighty deeds prove that He was the Mighty God? Who but the Mighty God could say, "Whatsoever ye ask in my name that will

I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son?"

Anxious child of God. Look upward! Your Savior is the Mighty God. How jubilantly Luther could sing:

*"A mighty fortress is our God,
A trusty shield and weapon;
Our help is He in all our need,
Our stay whate'er doth happen."*

"The everlasting Father"—He taught His disciples to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven." And Luther explains it so beautifully, "God would hereby tenderly invite us to believe that He is truly our Father, and we are truly His children, so that we may ask of Him with all cheerfulness and confidence as dear children ask of their dear father."

Fathers who were strong and the support of their children become weak and feeble and die. Children stand weeping at the grave. Father is gone. Jesus says, "I will not leave you fatherless, I will come unto you." Today, tomorrow, and all the days of life you may know that you have a Father, an everlasting Father. When you become lonesome and tired and disappointed, think of the Father's house with the many mansions. We are reminded of the Christian family, the Communion of Saints, and the love that we as children of the one Father should have

"This was the testament He left them as He went to His death, 'My peace I give unto you.' "

toward each other.

"The Prince of Peace"—it is fitting that this should come last. All that this Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father is doing for us is summed up in the word peace. Thus the angels sang at His entrance into the world as the Redeemer, "Peace on earth, good will toward men." This was the testament He left them as He went to His death, "My peace I give unto you." This was His greeting after the resurrection, "Peace be unto you." The Apostles went about preaching the gospel of peace. He brings peace to the troubled soul when by His grace the forgiving God and the repentant sinner are united.

How humanity is torn with hatred, jealousy, bitterness, envy, strife and every other malady that springs from sin. But some day men shall learn no more war. They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Then shall the earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the water covers the sea. God's last word for this sin-cursed earth is peace. . . .

(The Lutheran Messenger)

Last editor of the *LUTHERAN MESSENGER* passed away

Rev. Sverre Torgerson, last man to edit *The Lutheran Messenger*, organ of the former Lutheran Free Church, passed away on Feb. 2 in Minneapolis, Minn. He was 93.

He edited the *Messenger* for 18 years, 1945-63, after serving parishes at Trinity, Duluth, Minn. (Associate), St. Paul's, Superior, Wis., Zion, Racine, Wis., Bronx, New York City, and Morris, Minn.

Pastor Torgerson was born Sept. 21, 1890, at Stavanger, Norway, and immigrated to the U.S. in 1909. He attended Augsburg College and Seminary in Minneapolis and Biblical Seminary in New York City. He was secretary of the LFC for five years and edited *Folkebladet*, Norwegian-language paper of the LFC, from 1947-53.

Pastor Torgerson was united in marriage to Ruth Andersen in 1923. She survives him as do three sons, Rev. Richard, Rev. Sheldon and David Torgerson.

His funeral service was held at Trinity Lutheran Church in Minneapolis on Feb. 5.

Blessed be his memory.

(Ed. note: Pastor Torgerson's editorials were usually sermonettes or homilies. He was an earnest and sincere pastor and co-worker.)

fellowship corner

LOVE TO ONE ANOTHER

"See how they love each other!" was a description of the early apostolic church and those were also the words which filled my heart one Sunday in December as I sat at the fellowship dinner in honor of all new members of Calvary Lutheran Church in Bismarck, North Dakota. You see, I am a newcomer to the AFLC and it was the serious weekly Bible study and the love and concern of the members for each other and for strangers which eventually drew me into that fellowship of believers.

The dinner is held once a year in a private room of a local restaurant

to celebrate and solidify the relationships between old and new members. It was opened with prayer by Pastor Einar Unseth, who gave a brief devotional message and recounted several blessings for which he was thankful. This was followed by a free and open time of sharing in which many members, new and old, expressed thanks to God for His protection, guidance and control. Hearts were filled with gratitude, and mine especially, for God's care and for how He has used the members of Calvary to reach into my life to show, in a flesh and blood way, how much He loves me. "To God be the glory for the things He has done."

—Connie Johansen

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 held membership.

WASHINGTON

Everett

Martin A. Skegerud, 71, Jan. 19, Calvary

SOUTH DAKOTA

Wallace

Kenneth Hogstad, 69, Jan. 23, Calvary

You cannot expect first-rate children from second-rate parents.

A web of prayer

by Mrs. John Kjos
Lake Park, Minn.

A couple of weeks ago a woman came to me and said, "I've been praying for your husband for a long time". And that is where I'll begin . . .

January 17, 1981 had started anxiously. It was Saturday. The past several days had been spent busily making a semi-load of wood for my parents and grandparents. After a couple days of rest, we returned to cut wood for our home.

Wood was plentiful where we lived in northwestern Wisconsin. Grandpa and Dad were using wood-burning stoves and so were we. Grandpa had made a wood-splitter from odds and ends, and we were in business. My parents, John's parents, my Grandpa and my youngest brother were the crew.

I went to a funeral that afternoon of a dear lady that belonged to a prayer group I attended. John's mom babysat our three children while I was away. While there I found myself wondering if John would like this certain song sung at his funeral. "Why did I think of that?" I wondered.

CRADLE ROLL . . .

Hampden, N. Dak.



Zoar WMF recently honored their Cradle Roll children. Pictured are: (seated) Michael Stinkoway, Matthew Stinkoway holding David Stinkoway, Naomi Damscheon holding Natasha Harder, Alicia Haugen. (Standing) Christopher Hodnefield, Nathaniel Hodnefield, Elizabeth Stinkoway, Suzanne Girodat and John Girodat.

I got some groceries after the funeral and headed home. It was soon supper-time and I wanted to be home to prepare something good for that hungry crew.

Before I could start supper, I received a call from Dad. I knew something wasn't right by the way he hesitated. Amy, John's mom, knew right away that something must have happened to her John. Dad finally broke the news, "John's been hurt. We don't know exactly what happened, nor how bad. Maybe he slipped into the fence when the tree went down and hurt his shoulder and his head." He would send Mom home to babysit so Amy and I could go in to the hospital.

After I hung up, Amy and I exchanged anxious looks, then prayed and hugged. She changed clothes as I made some phone calls to replace John for the next day. We had two country parishes near Cumberland.

Mom was soon home and said, "Oh, you're both going? Don't worry, they'll probably just keep him overnight."

On the way, a short 3-miles, we were quiet except for the comment I made, "I wonder what kind of a patient a pastor makes." After no response, I added, "It could be bad couldn't it?" Amy, who is a nurse, answered this time, "Yes, very bad."

When we got to the hospital John was in an emergency examining room and the nurse was trying to start an I.V. John kept saying, "It hurts. It hurts," I had no idea of the terrible anguish he was in. Soon he would be in X-ray then I could see him again.

After X-rays, he saw me and told me he loved me, then he violently threw up. That is when I got scared. He didn't seem the same after that.

The doctor on call said they wanted him transferred to the Eau Claire Trauma Center for observation. X-rays showed he had spider cracks all over his skull and one small bone was broken in his neck. His shoulder was not hurt. Since only one could ride along in the ambulance, I was chosen.

It took 30-45 minutes to ready John and the ambulance. In the meantime, I called a member of our prayer group to pray for John. Amy and Dad went home to get a change of clothes and gas the car. They would follow soon.

I had no idea of the web of prayer

being spun even as we were on that long one-hour ride to Eau Claire. By the time we reached the hospital, a phone call was waiting for me from John's cousin who lived in Eau Claire. She had been contacted by her parents in North Dakota who had been called by one of our parishioners - the daughter of the woman called for prayer back home. They all wanted to pray.

Soon many people in many states and in many cities were praying for John. These were people we knew, some we hardly knew and some we didn't know at all but who were friends and relatives of our acquaintances. All were part of a web of prayer for us. California, Washington, Oregon, Texas, Colorado, North Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio and Connecticut were the "reported" stations.

Other than this web of prayer, there is no explanation for what happened in the next 24 hours, the coming months and through these 3 years.

Meanwhile, back in the emergency room, I was asking too many questions and was in the way, when the crew of white arrived minutes later. I was asked to leave. How I wanted to fight this, but submitted and left.

I was confused and filled with disbelief while the doctor, a neurosurgeon, soon told me it was bad, very bad. John was "99% - plus dead." There was a growing blood clot from the severed artery and it was pushing the brain down and it would eventually herniate his brain at the brain stem and kill him. It was a 50/50% chance that John could even make it through surgery. A bare 3% chance John would ever be normal. "Did he mean possibly a vegetable?" My head was racing, my heart was telling me how happy John would be in heaven with his Jesus whom he loved. But my mouth said, "Do what you can." Instantly, the doctor was gone.

There were papers to sign and more phone calls to make for prayer. Then we started the longest 3-hours we have ever lived through. Amy and Dad arrived and were deeply grieved at the worsening reports I shared with them about John since they left me back home.

We made funeral plans, moving plans, all kinds of plans. And we prayed. Amy touched my heart as she prayed, "You did not spare Your Son, how can I ask

you to spare mine?" But my Dad said he still saw a little light at the end of a long, long dark tunnel.

I was nearly exhausted emotionally and physically and was given a place to lie down.

After our long wait, the doctor appeared again saying that John was 100% better than before he went to surgery. But he cautioned us that it was still "touch and go" for the next 3 days. He didn't yet know the extent of brain damage.

By Sunday morning, phone calls were coming to reassure us of their prayers. About 11:30 AM John's cousin came to see him. Despite a bandaged head and many tubes from head, throat, nose and more and wires from his chest, he tried to talk! The nurse attending him in Intensive Care was astonished and said, "When I see the report of how he was when he came in last night and now he is sitting up and trying to talk - there is no explanation. It's a miracle!"

I learned later that another church in our hometown had a prayer service for John after their morning worship as the whole community was visibly shaken by the news of John. The time was just about 11:30 AM!

John recovered remarkably fast - within a month. He was home on Valentine's Day to a yellow ribbon on our elm tree and was preaching by Mother's Day!

John has said he wasn't saved for something great, but because people prayed and God answered.

My heart gives a skip when someone comes up to me to tell me they've been a part of a web of prayer for John. Thank you. God has answered your prayers and still is.

THE EFFECTUAL, FERVENT PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN AVAILETH MUCH. - James 5:16b.

Eastern N.Dak. Women's Retreat announced

"New Life in Christ" is the theme for the Eastern N. Dak. Women's Retreat to be held March 23-24 at Red Willow Bible Camp, Binford, N. Dak.

Storytelling with Muriel Freije will open the Retreat on Friday and our guest speaker, Mary Lindquist will be sharing with us Friday and Saturday.

Registration begins at 2:00 p.m. on Friday and the fee is \$20.00.

"Come aside and rest awhile," and let your hearts and lives be renewed.

news of the churches

from here and there...

Roseau, Minn. — Among chairmen elected for the congregations of the parish at recent annual meetings were Joe Erickson, Norland; Stuart Nelson, Roseau; and Leonard Goos, Rose. No report yet from Spruce.

Badger, Minn. — A new name for what has been the Young Adult group in the Badger Creek-Oiland parish is Parish Activities Group. It will accommodate those who are also older than what may be thought of as "young adults." A new Young Adults group may also be formed.

Ferndale, Wash. — The old parsonage in Ferndale is passing to second ownership since the congregation sold it.

Plans are to show the film "The God Maker" at Triumph Lutheran, with an ex-Mormon in attendance.

Dalton, Minn. — Dinners were held at each of the four churches in the parish during the month of February following 11 o'clock services.

Thief River Falls, Minn. — Rev. Ralph Rokke, pastor of Rosedale Lutheran, made a trip to Israel right after Christmas and showed slides from the trip at the congregation's annual Sweetheart's Banquet on Feb. 12 at the Viking Village Restaurant.

Newfolden, Minn. — The film "Lessons from a Sheepdog," based on Philip Keller's book by the same name, was shown at Family Night at Westaker Lutheran on Feb. 12.

Tioga, N. Dak. — A second annual Sweetheart Banquet was held at Zion Lutheran Church on Feb. 12. Musical numbers and skits made up the program. All profits went to AFLBS.

Drummond, Wis. — Adult Bible studies are being held each Wednesday evening at the home of Pastor and Mrs. H. Van Someren. A variety of subjects are being discussed as answers are being sought from the Scriptures about some of life's questions and problems.



Minneapolis Minn.-

Received in membership in Morgan Avenue Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minn., in December, were, back row, left to right: Emil Rimpala, Phillip McElhaney, Jefferson Romais and Gary Lilleoen; and front row: Ina Wirtenshohn, Hildie Niemela, Heima Maraj, Olga Kanto and Elsie Kalinonen. Pastor Yeddo Gottel is shown at the left.

Personalities

Rev. Laurel Udden, presently a member of the faculty of the Association Schools, has accepted the call to become pastor of Medicine Lake Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minn., a position he will assume in May. He recently served as executive director of the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement for nine years.

Rev. David Molstre, Dickinson, N. Dak., completed a three-day series of special meetings at Beaver Creek Lutheran Church, rural Tioga, N. Dak., today, Feb. 28. The theme was "God, our help in the past, our hope for the future."

Men's Retreat at ARC

A Men's Retreat will be held at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis., March 2-4. The theme will be Stewardship. The speakers are Rev. Robert L. Lee, Minneapolis, Minn., and Pastor Roger Krueger, Fergus Falls, Minn.

Total cost for the weekend is \$33. Reservations may be made by calling John Brown, Brodhead, Wis., 608-897-2393.

light on the way

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

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At the foot of the cross

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Here God points out for us the way to forgiveness of sins. All of Holy Writ shows us that repentance and confession of sins is followed by forgiveness.

While David tried to hide his sin he was unhappy. But then he took the blessed step that every burdened sinner must take, and about which David says: "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord" (Psalm 32:5). And the answer was prompt: "And Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Psalm 32:5). Then David experienced anew the great joy of salvation from sin.

But David's God still lives. He is the same today as in David's time, and He treats every sinner who comes to Him as He treated David. The very moment that you confess your sin before God, with willingness to shun it, that very moment your sin is forgiven. God's own holy Word tells you so. That is His promise to you.

Place yourself at the foot of His cross, and ponder this thought until God's Holy Spirit convinces you of this comforting truth: "My sins are forgiven." Believe it not because you feel it or understand it, but because God has said it, and has bound Himself by His Word.

Then your heart shall find peace and your soul shall rejoice exceedingly in the assurance: I have obtained mercy. And you are transferred, as it were, from the cold darkness of winter into the genial warmth and light of summer. Then you are able to rejoice with Solomon: "Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land" (S. of Sol. 2:11-12).

I thank Thee, dear Savior, that Thy blood cleanses also me from all my sin!

"Then on Thee I cast my burden,
Sink it in the depths below!
Let me know Thy gracious pardon,
Wash me, make me white as snow!"

—Søren Dahl
Courtesy, Tract Mission