

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

March 1, 1983

There were three crosses
at Calvary; that of
Jesus was in the middle.

Luoma Photos

In this issue: Lenten messages, A Look at World Missions

AT THE MASTER'S FEET



Pastor Emerson Anderson

Godly contentment

Recently at our house we were discussing hobbies. Finally we decided we should determine the dictionary definition of "hobby." We found that it is that which a person most likes to do in his spare time. We agreed we have no hobbies because we have no spare time. However, we also agreed we were doing what we most like to do. That's the way it is with the Christian life. There is satisfaction whatever the lot may be. The Lord is our joy and satisfaction, and with Him we are content.

There are numerous examples of

this in Scripture. Paul claimed that Christ was his life. He said, "For me to live is Christ." He also said he had learned to be content with much or little. He demonstrated this in a jail at Philippi. He and his friend were in miserable circumstances; yet at midnight they were singing and praising God. They had the Lord as their satisfaction; thus they didn't lose it in jail. This truth explains how Paul could write encouraging letters from prison, telling Christians to rejoice. Consider the Apostle John. He had been sent as a criminal to live among criminals on a barren island called Patmos. He didn't lose his joy. He said, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." It was then that he had his glorious meeting with the Lord. Read of it in Revelation one.

I once heard a missionary to China speak. He told of being there when the Communists took over. He was cast into a prison which was most miserable. It was totally dark. He soon found it was infested with bugs and rats. His first response was bitter reaction against God. He questioned God's wisdom, justice and love. As time went on he got over his bitterness and began to commune with the Lord. He said, "Never was the Lord's presence so real to me as in that cell." He had found the secret of joy in the Christian life. No one could take it away. No matter what came, he was doing what he most liked to do. He was in the fellowship and service of the Lord.

I recall this experience as a small child. I was raised in a rural community. Those were days of deep

economic depression. Most people in our congregation were very poor, yet they seemed quite happy. How they liked to sing! They would sing about their happiness. I remember them singing, "I am happy in the service of the King; I am happy, oh, so happy." They had found the secret of life. Even a depression couldn't deprive them of satisfaction.

In the 16th Psalm we read, "The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; indeed my heritage is beautiful to me." I want to join the psalmist and bear testimony that that is my experience, too. Life has not been without its problems or disappointments; however, there is a joy and satisfaction that overrides it all. I am very content knowing and serving the Lord.

Everyone who is saved should know of what the psalmist speaks and join him in testimony. We will be able to do it if Christ is our true treasure. "He satisfies, joy He supplies." As we spend time with Him in the closet we will find our life at all times being lived in the atmosphere of His presence. How is it with you? Honor the Lord by being able to say to your brethren, and to your world which is so dissatisfied, "The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places."

Heavenly Father, thank You for satisfying our souls. Thank You or a Savior Who loves us, and Who has become our Bread of Life. We look forward to seeing Him face to face in His eternal kingdom. Till then, we go on our way rejoicing in Him. Amen.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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by Rev. Carl Hort,
Brooten, Minn.

IT IS FINISHED

History's
majestic
moment

A real man died there that day on the "place of the skull." You could say that He was killed, crucified until dead. Moments before He died, as men tell it, He took a sip of vinegar, which had been held up to his lips. Then He had something to say, something important. "Jesus took the vinegar and said, 'It is finished!' Then He bowed His head and died" (*Today's English Version*).

"It is finished!" It is His own judgment on Himself and on everything He was given to do. I don't know of anyone else who could say it in exactly the same way. We finish some things and leave others undone. Even the things we finish are only half finished many times. Someone always has to put the finishing touches on them, somewhere, because things never remain the same in this world of ours. If they don't have to be redone, they have to be repaired, restored or renewed. What Jesus did was *finished*. He entered in once into the Holy Place and made Himself a sacrifice for sin. That's finished.

It is His final cry to the world. He has one more word, spoken between Himself and His Father. But this He said with a loud voice for everyone to hear. It is a kind of shout of victory, in the strangest place you can possibly imagine. A man is dying there like a common criminal, with all the shame and disgrace that go with such a death, and He shouts with a loud voice, "It is finished.!"

It is only one word, a single word. "Finished!" It is not that He is finished with the world and the world with Him. It is not that He is now finished with suffering and pain—He knew all about that, and He still knows.

What is finished? Why, everything Jesus came to do is finished. I am not just doing My own thing, He told His friends and His enemies. I came to do the will of Him who sent Me.

If I were just talking for Myself that would be one thing; I talk for my Father because I know Him and He knows Me. It's the dutiful Son, having done everything His Father asked Him to do, letting the world know: "It is finished!"

It's not just over and done with. It is completed. It is a once for all thing. It happened and it lasts. It's an achievement, unique and greatest in all history, and lasts forever in its results. Not so with Henry Buckle, an English history writer who devoted 17 years of his life to the writing of a History of Civilization but only completed two volumes before he died. He cried out in his final moments, "My book, my book! Oh to finish my book!"

The Son of God was dying on Good Friday with the full satisfaction of having completed His Book of life. It is, as people have pointed out down through the centuries, a book of redemption, of buying us back to God. He paid the price,

"What is finished? Why, everything Jesus came to do is finished."

that's one way of putting it. He offered Himself as a sacrifice and sweet-smelling savor to God. That's another way of putting it. He came to seek and to save the lost, living the life they have to live and dying the death they have to die. That's still another way of looking at it. He put Himself in our place; He suffered once, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.

No matter how we look at it, He did it, and it's finished. Nobody needs to do more to complete it. Nobody can. Anybody who thinks he has to do something to complete his salvation doesn't understand it. *It is finished!* In Jesus there is salvation full and free. The night is departing and the day is approaching. The sunlight in this new day is the grace of God. You see it *all* in Him. He did what He alone could do, what He had to do, and now it is finished. By the grace of God you are saved through faith in Jesus Christ. *It is not by works* or the things you might be able to do. There is not a thing to make you boastful, no matter how humble you are, or how righteous you think you are in yourself.

It is finished; whatever it took to flood the world with the grace of God, that's finished! For this Jesus was born of a woman, living under the law, to redeem and set free those who are under the law, so that we might become by adoption the sons of God. For this He died, offering His life as a ransom for the many. For this God raised Him from the dead and gave Him a Name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. That was His purpose all along and now *It is finished!*

Jesus is not dead and gone. He is alive and His purpose is being carried out in the world. This is hard to understand when the world is in such

FINISHED . . .

a mess today. People can still destroy themselves and they still do. This saving purpose is being carried out in the world by God Himself through ordinary people, people who have understood His gracious and saving presence in the world.

With Jesus, *sin* is finished. Righteousness takes its place, the righteousness of God which comes by faith to all and upon all those who believe in Jesus. In Jesus death is finished and life takes its place, the life of God filled with love which enables people to stand up with head held high even in the presence of God Himself. In Jesus the *old* passes away and the new comes in just as He said it would. "Behold, I make all things new." He said, "It is finished!" and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

Jesus looked like a failure that day on His cross. Death is the ultimate failure. Even that He took into His own heart and dealt the deathblow to death itself. He did not have to say that first Good Friday, "My work is still undone." He did not come to be served but to serve and to give His

"In Jesus
death is finished and
life takes its place. . . .

life as a ransom for the masses. Now that's done. Life is reborn through faith in Him and in what He did, His finished work. "You have been redeemed," said Peter, "from your former vain way of life, not with the things the world counts precious like silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

He met every temptation, every weakness, every sin of humanity, as the real man He was, but without sinning Himself. With unfaltering faithfulness to His Father, He did what the Father asked Him to do. Finally, He died as the Scriptures said He would. He died for our sins and was buried. And as the Scriptures said He would be, He was raised

from the dead on the third day. He lives! We can't forget the resurrection even on the day of His death. That tells us He was right! "It is finished!"

Separation from God, that's finished. A guilty conscience, that's finished. The loneliness of life, that's finished. The corruption that is in the world, that's finished. Fear of death, that's finished. The nagging worry what will happen after death, that's finished.

He died with confidence and trust in His Father. "It is finished!" He said it, not I. I am not making this up, nor did those faithful witnesses who told us what He said on the cross. He said, "It is finished!" and He meant it.

This is not surrender. It is true they took the limp, wounded, dead body down from the cross that day. They laid it away in a tomb as we do when people die. He really died, but He was not defeated and He did not surrender. He died driving all the forces of evil before Him. Nothing had gone wrong. Jesus just drained the cup, and in triumph He hurled it from Him.

He did not stumble down into death; He stepped into it as the King He was: "It is finished!" To understand this, you have to see God in that real man who died there that day. That is the way God does things.

Someone has put it this way: "God *in* us at Bethlehem; God *for* us on Calvary; God *with* us in the resurrection, and God *through* us in the world today as the Spirit of God comes to tell the Good News of Jesus Christ."

That's a great true story. It's all in that one word "finished." It is His Word, His alone. Take Him, my friend, at His word. He is *for* you and you can be *for* Him. He is *with* you and you can be *with* Him. Take Him as your Savior and that word of His will become gloriously true for you, not as the end of everything but the *beginning* of everything. His work is finished and done. All that remains is that it be finished and done in you.

"Thy kingdom come," we pray in our Lord's Prayer. Let His kingdom come in you. Let it come in you as

"He really died, but He was not defeated and He did not surrender."

you put all your trust in Jesus, receiving His forgiveness, following in His obedience and living His life, the life He gives to everyone who has faith in Him.

"Christ has entered . . . into heaven itself," said the writer to the Hebrews, "now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf . . . He has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And just as it is appointed for men to die once and after that comes the judgment, so Christ, having been offered *once* to bear the sins of many, will appear the second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him" (Heb. 9:24-28, RSV).

In His word, "It is finished!" there is the music of heaven. All has been made ready. "I go to prepare a place for you," He said. Victory is in His voice. All who hear His voice and call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. That's for me, my friends, and I want it to be for *you*. To you the Savior offers His forgiveness, His joy, His peace. Take Him, and be saved. Take Him, and be renewed. Take Him, and live. Take Him, He is for real. Take Him and you yourself will be real.

Gracious Word

According to Thy gracious
word,
In meek humility,
This will I do, my dying Lord,
I will remember Thee.

Thy body, broken for my
sake,
My bread from heaven shall
be;
Thy testamental cup I take,
And thus remember Thee.



Rev.
Eugene Enderlein
Director

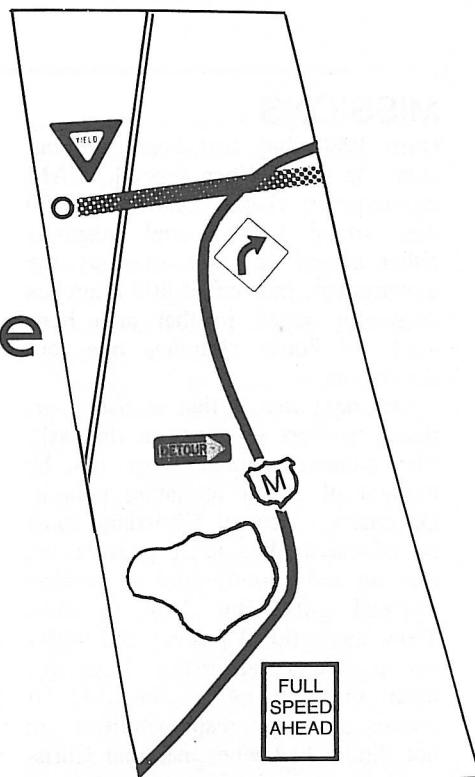
As we consider the third decade of our Association of Free Lutheran Congregations' world missions' ministry we see opportunities ahead of us as well as hindrances and concerns. When a motorist travels along the highway he is alert to road signs and other signals of concern. As we travel through this decade we must be alert to prevailing conditions and heed the road signs of **Caution, Bump, Steep Incline, Yield,** and always hope for **Full Speed Ahead.**

In previous years evangelical Christians have thought of missions as *evangelization*: reaching those who are without the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Today, in 1983, this must still be our main emphasis. No matter what the conditions within a nation might be, we know that *God is at work today*. He is the *Lord* of history. We firmly stand upon the word of our Lord Jesus Christ, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself" (John 14:3) and, "Be ye also ready: for in such a hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:44). But meanwhile, as

Traveling into the next decade

we await His second coming, we must obey His command, "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13). Actually, we must be diligently laboring just as Nehemiah and the men of Judah were when they rebuilt the wall around Jerusalem. We recall that they had to work in a state of constant readiness: enemies might attack at any moment. Yet the wall had to be built! So they also scooped mortar and laid stones and feverishly worked. We, too, must work hard. The time is short. Christ is coming soon! Let us be constantly alert and obey our Lord's admonition to "Watch and Pray."

Missions *must* be our emphasis. Let's beware of the error of naming everything that goes on outside of the church's actual building as "missions." That is too broad a target and we may find ourselves too "watered down" in our emphasis. Let's concentrate on "communicating the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ, and then encouraging them to



accept Him as Savior and Lord, and become responsible members of the body of Christ."

I recommend a "Full Speed Ahead attitude" in *church planting*. This must be our primary task in the next decade. Our AFLC world mission program is striving to establish Bible-believing, free and living congregations in our countries of involvement. One caution sign on this roadway must read "Takes Time." Just as a farmer plants the seed, carefully cultivates and waters his field, and then patiently waits for his crop, we must patiently sow the seed of God's Word, allow Him to bring in the saved ones, and then nurture them and cultivate these believers into a local congregation. There are no "instant" methods for this process; fervent prayer and patience are required! But we do have confidence that this is precisely the emphasis which God blesses. Our Lord's assuring promise is: "... upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). An outstanding example of the dependability of church planting was shared recently by the assistant director of The Evangelical Alliance Mission. Their mission had penetrated China in 1890 and had to leave during the 1950s.

Gethsemane can I forget,
Or there Thy conflict see,
Thine agony and bloody
sweat,
And not remember Thee?

When to the cross I turn
mine eyes,
And rest on Calvary,
O Lamb of God, my sacrifice,
I must remember Thee.

Remember Thee, and all Thy
pains,
And all Thy love to me;
Yes, while a breath, a pulse
remains,
Will I remember Thee.

And when these failing lips
grow dumb,
And mind and mem'ry flee,
When Thou shalt in Thy
kingdom come,
Jesus, remember me.

James Montgomery
(The Concordia Hymnal)

MISSIONS . . .

Until 1980 they had heard nothing from the field. When several TEAM missionaries visited China in 1980 they found schools and hospitals either closed or taken over by the government, but out of 100 churches originally begun in that area hundreds of house churches now are flourishing.

Our next step is that of using *national workers* to carry on the task. The national church must not be thought of as an immature church. Of course, national Christians must be educated. We must provide the training and opportunities to develop spiritual gifts. But then we must allow the national pastors and workers to assume leadership. Does this mean that our job is finished? Of course not! Our responsibilities are not diminished when national Christians become leaders. We in the United States of America are blessed with the resources of providing schooling and support for these national workers. These countries just cannot provide a living wage for their national workers. More than one-quarter of the earth's population lives individually on less than three dollars a week (Lorry Lutz, managing editor of *Christian Nationals*). We must be willing to provide the financial resources to keep national workers laboring full-time for the Gospel. In our AFLC mission program we provide partial support for our national workers and the national church carries the remainder of support, establishing a "partnership" in carrying this responsibility. Another striking answer to the above ques-

tion, "Does this mean our job is finished?" is the fact that "there is no national church in 16,750 people groups," according to Ralph Winter, general director of U.S. Center for World Mission. "They need foreigners, either from another part of their country or from another nation, to bring them the Gospel" America has been blessed with excellent agencies for Bible training and material wealth. We must continue to both *send* missionaries and *support* national workers. We have a great task to do!

As we think of "sending" and "providing" we must underscore our concern for missionaries who are called of God and who have a servant's heart. A missionary is not an "automatic authority figure" on the mission field. He must go to the national churches with the attitude of giving and hoping for respect, e.g., "What may I learn from you?" The missionary must be convinced that he or she shall work *with* the national church, not *over* it. "I don't like to distinguish between indigenous leaders and American Christian leaders," states Bill Tartar, the general director of International Missions, "It's more of a brotherhood, a fellowship. Generally, the one God chooses as the most qualified should fill a position, whether he's a national or a missionary."

We praise the Lord for our faithful missionaries who go willingly to another country with the firm intention of making missions their life's work. An additional blessing is the short-term worker. This person goes to the mission field to devote a portion of time to fill a given need, and often at personal expense. Our AFLC has been blessed with willing-hearted short-term helpers from time to time. I would like to encourage retirees who have the financial means to support themselves to offer to go to a mission field as a helper. God bless these dear Christians who provide valuable assistance in the areas of maintenance, teaching, office duties, etc. Our AFLC cannot call and provide support for a short-term support worker until other personnel needs are supplied, but God may lead self-supporting helpers to offer themselves to aid our mission endeavors.

I see interest in Bible School students and seminarians for our AFLC world mission outreach. It is exciting to hear young men and women explain the eagerness they have to give of themselves in God's vast missionary enterprise! That leads to a challenging question: "*Are we prepared to send them?*" The Holy Spirit is faithful in calling out laborers into the harvest field. Are we ready to equip them, send them, pray for them and provide for them? This is a penetrating question. It is imperative that each Christian think of missions as "*my responsibility.*" Missions will succeed only if each individual local congregation thinks of world missions as "*our task,*" and the missionaries as "*our families.*" World missions is not the job of the world missions' department at headquarters, nor the calling for a few big churches, but we must each approach this challenge as "*my own.*"

As a motorist travels along the highway he dreads encountering the signs *Detour* or *Roadblock*. Our world mission outreach sometimes encounters obstacles, too. One roadblock can be the *government* of a nation. Thirty-seven countries today are either closed to missionaries or have made it very difficult for North Americans to enter. Some governments do not see missionaries who preach or teach the Gospel as very valuable contributors to their country. Therefore, as in India and Mexico, we must work through national pastors and workers. Some governments are actually hostile to Christians. Recently, in India an attempt was made to introduce an "anti-conversion bill," which would have made it illegal to attempt to win anyone to another religion. Sometimes a government "stalls" a mission outreach, hoping that delays will cause frustration and discouragement. Our AFLC has been dealing with this challenge in Paraguay these past two years. Fervent, faithful prayer is needed!

Another obstacle in the road of mission progress is the general lack of knowledge about missionaries and modern mission challenges. Ian Hay, general director for Sudan Interior Mission, claims that "The average
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Pastor Samuel Flores, left, two laymen and Pastor Enderlein in Mexico.

the thousand dollar prize

Text: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

Barbara was reading a magazine when suddenly she jumped up and said, "Oh Mother, I am going to try to win a thousand dollars so I must begin to think what I will do with it."

Barbara had found in the magazine an offer of a prize of \$1,000 for the one who would find the largest number of names of things in a picture, all beginning with the letter "p." Barbara was sure she could win that prize, for she was able to write down more than 25 words without trying at all.

One of the conditions of the winning of the prize was that the successful candidate must write an account of what she or he would do with the money after it was received.

Barbara's mother was interested to know what her girl would really do with that \$1,000 prize if she should win it.

What would *you* do with a thousand dollars if *you* had it?

This is what Barbara planned to do:

In Barbara's Sunday School, for a number of weeks, stewardship had been taught, and Barbara had come to understand that God owned all things, and that she was only a steward holding in trust and managing for the real Owner, who was God. And

so Barbara, in writing down what she would do with her \$1,000 said, that first of all, she would set aside \$100 as a Separated Portion, in acknowledgment of God's ownership to be used in promoting His kingdom. Barbara had already begun the practice of putting ten cents out of every dollar she received into her stewardship bank to help her remember her stewardship. What do you suppose the second thing Barbara planned was? Now it chanced that she had been going to the dentist a great many times to have her teeth straightened and it was costing the family a deal of money. It had cost so much that the family were going without things that they really wanted, and indeed needed, in order that Barbara's teeth might be helped.

So the second thing Barbara planned to do with the \$1,000 was to pay the dentist's bill so that the family might be relieved of the burden that had been placed upon them. Barbara understood that God wants us to think of others in the use of all the things which He entrusts to us—our talents, our time, our strength, our wisdom and our money. These are not ours to do with as we please, but God intends that we should use them in order to help others.

I wish I had the time to tell you how Barbara divided the rest of her money. She planned to put some in the bank, for she realized that it was Christian and wise to save a part of all that was entrusted to her, just as Joseph saved up during the fat years in Egypt, making ready for the seven lean years which were to follow.

Part of the money Barbara thought she would spend for some things she really wanted very much. Some of the money she would use to pay for some piano lessons for herself and for "Little Sister" and to buy a new tennis racquet for her brother Edwin. Then she said she wanted to take all the rest of the money and give it to her mother and her dad. Laughing with joy, she said to her mother, "You wouldn't want a tennis racquet like Edwin or piano lessons like Kitty and me, but here's money for

you to get anything you do want, because I love you." You see, Barbara believed that all that remained after she had set aside the \$100 still belonged to God and should be used in ways that would please God.

Barbara worked hard on her prize puzzle for a month and then she sent her answer in. The prize-winner is to be announced in two months after the contest closes. Barbara often looks at the calendar and counts how many days are left, and wishes frequently that she may win the prize. And we all wish that she may, don't we? If she does, do you think she will know how best to use the money? Whether she wins the thousand dollars or not, do you know, I sort of feel that she has attained a little bit of the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus—the calling to be a faithful steward, for I think it would be hard to find a better steward of twelve years anywhere in all the U.S.A.

HYMN

Sing and memorize—"Saviour, Teach Me Day by Day" (Call particular attention to all stewardship implications in the hymn.)

Saviour, teach me day by day,
Love's sweet lesson to obey;
Sweeter lesson cannot be,
Loving Him who first loved me.

Teach me thus Thy steps to trace,
Strong to follow in Thy grace;
Learning how to love from Thee,
Loving Him who first loved me.

Love in loving finds employ,
In obedience all her joy;
Ever new that joy will be,
Loving Him who first loved me.

TO TEACH—That we should first of all remember God in all we receive by the practice of the Separated Portion and that all the rest must be counted a trust to be used in ways pleasing to God. Indicate that God plans that we may have everything needful for our best life. He does not expect us to give all our money to the Church nor to missions.

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

What would
you do with
a thousand
dollars if
you
had it?



MISSIONS . . .

church member (in America) is 15 to 20 years behind in his thinking." It is true, for example, that our AFLC does minister in several rugged interior village churches such as in India, Paraguay, and Brazil, but it is also true that we are involved in very modern, thriving, beautiful cities such as León, Mexico, Curitiba, Brazil, and Guntur, India. Have our people kept pace with recent events affecting missions? Some people think of missionaries as "strange," and even wonder what to talk about when visiting with missionaries home on furlough. Missionaries are real people with real needs just like you and I have needs.

Sometimes a road is blocked by an obstacle so large that progress is impeded. That obstacle must be moved! Two such terrible obstacles to world missions must be faced and removed. One is the materialistic life-style of most American Christians and the other is the erroneous idea that "success is evidenced by numbers." Let us consider that first large obstacle: materialism. American Christians are usually used to a very high standard of living. We are wealthy as compared to the rest of the world. Director Ralph Winter of the U.S. Center for World Mission in a recent issue of *Moody Monthly* magazine claimed, "Ninety percent of our people are too addicted to the cares, riches and pleasures of the world to respond (to the call of missions)". Yet the very real fact is that the cost of missions is increasing. High inflation rates overseas are crippling many mission endeavors and forcing unnecessary hardships upon missionaries. It is *not* cheap and easy to run a mission outreach. It costs thousands of dollars. Will American Christians work together to "push" this huge obstacle out of the road? Our challenge in the next decade is to simplify our life-styles here at home so that we may send more monies to other lands via Christian missionaries and tools to proclaim the Gospel of Christ.

The other large obstacle is the mindset of many church people that missions may be evaluated by the same standards of many businesses:

either that "numbers evidence success" or that "every investment should show a logical return." There is no Scriptural basis for these views and every thinking Christian should oppose them with vehemence. Missions will not always show a "profit." The Holy Spirit often does a quiet work in people's hearts over a period of years; often the results are not seen for a long time. But the important matter is that God's Word will not return void and it will prosper according to its purpose! (that of convicting men of sin and their need for Christ). I feel burdened to share a caution with our people, and that is, "*Churches are not in a position to judge a missionary's efforts.*" Let us remember that God has not called us to be successful, but to be faithful to Him.



Veteran missionary to Brazil, Rev. John H. Abel of Curitiba.

Our people need to be more excited about missions. We need to believe that God can open doors of nations and men's hearts. We need to be thoroughly convinced that pagans in other lands are not happy and contented in their life-styles. Actually, they are living in fear of death, demons and disease. We need to believe, as the Bible declares, that each person without saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is eternally lost and destined for hell. We must not waiver on this Scriptural stand. Our Lord told us plainly, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6). Let us soberly consider the truth of that Scripture. Let us mentally put ourselves in the place of the heathen people we want to reach.

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O Come and Mourn with Me Awhile

O come and mourn with me
awhile;
O come ye to the Saviour's
side;
O come, together let us
mourn:
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified!

Have we no tears to shed for
Him,
While soldiers scoff and Jews
deride?
Ah! look how patiently He
hangs:
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified!

Seven time He spake, seven
words of love;
And all three hours His
silence cried
For mercy on the souls of
men:
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified!

O break, O break, hard
heart of mine!
The weak self-love and guilty
pride
His Pilate and His Judas
were:
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified!

A broken heart, a fount
tears,
Ask, and they will not be
denied;
A broken heart love's
cradle is:
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified!

O love of God! O sin of
man!
In this dread act your
strength is tried,
And victory remains with
love:
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified!

Frederick W. Faber
(from *The Church Hymnary*)

editorials

FOUR TEMPTATIONS

The Book of Proverbs lists seven "things which the Lord hates." They are "haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and a man who sows discord among brothers" (Proverbs 6:17-19).

Adolf Köberle writes of four areas of temptation often mentioned in Scripture, in this book *The Quest for Holiness*. They are the sins of the tongue, avarice, impure thoughts and the corruption of the body. Köberle warns that anyone who doesn't take these temptations seriously and guard against them is in danger of losing his faith.

Let us look at them somewhat briefly. *Sins of the tongue*. These can be of two kinds; profane and foul talk and words of gossip and unkindness. Profane and foul talk can be more easily guarded against than the other, which is more subtle. While some children learn to curse and swear at father's and/or mother's knee, for others it is a practise deliberately entered into. The individual chooses to enter into such a pattern of speech, often feeling that it is a mark of manliness or worldliness. And of the latter, it certainly is. It goes without saying that there is much profane and foul speech in our world today. But it has no place in the Christian's life.

Words of gossip and unkindness are more subtle. They don't involve words bad in themselves, only words put to bad use. Gossip is the passing around of information about someone else which is not complimentary or helpful. If gossip is really malicious it intends to wound and hurt. In either kind the highest goal is not truth, or love. And where only truth is involved, sometimes that can be sent around in a way that hurts. Unkind words may be spoken to someone or about someone. Christians shouldn't be unkind in their speech, but sometimes they are, possibly unintentionally. When the psalmist said, "Clear Thou me from hidden faults," he may well have had sins of the tongue in mind.

Sins of avarice. Avarice is greed; it is the desire for material things. We live in such a materialistic society. A girl from East Germany about to return to her homeland after a visit to the U.S. for a Lutheran World Federation meeting was the object of pity by new-found friends as she was to go back to a totalitarian state. But she warned them that they had their dangers, too, the many material good things of American life. We would say, "That's a danger we can live with. That we can handle."

But can we be so sure? These forces, too, are subtle. At present it is almost a patriotic duty for us to buy as much as we can so that our national economy picks up. What do we really need? Notice the conflict. The Christian message is, practice some self-denial. So we need wisdom and one thing we must be sure to do—give

generously to God's work of bringing the Gospel to the world and helping hurting people.

Köberle's third category of temptation is *impure thoughts*. From all we know, Bible times were simple times as far as the temptations to sensuality are concerned and yet there was a good deal of immorality even then. David is a notable example. Jesus broadened the range of sin against the sixth commandment when He put lust in that category (Matthew 5:27, 28).

Television has brought unusual immoral influences right into our homes. Consider the changes which have taken place in the past five years and only a fool would say that there won't be any further lowering of old barriers to smut in TV programming. What about books, magazines, movies, some advertising, etc.?

We live in such a permissive society. Writers of advice columns in our papers and magazines have largely abandoned the Christian ethic, even Judeo-Christian ethics, and advise against pre-marital sexual playing around only if one is not "mature enough" to handle it. The use of "the pill" has opened up the way to undreamed of freedom in pre-marital and extra-marital "affairs" with little danger of being caught. And in the view of many, even church people, the only sin is in being caught.

So the Christian, who lives by a higher standard, or marches to a different drummer, if you prefer, must be on constant guard as he threads his way through a world beset by temptations to impurity. The preventative to immorality is to use the strengths of the Word, prayer, Christian fellowship and service. And to heed Paul's words: "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Philippians 4:8).

The fourth great temptation is to follow those practices which *corrupt the body*. Jesus warned against "dissipation and drunkenness" (Luke 21:34) and Paul included drunkenness in his catalog of "works of the flesh" in Galatians 5:19-22. In light of the tragic record of the results of alcohol use as a beverage we plead for total abstinence among Christians. The same can be said for the use of non-prescription drugs. The use of tobacco should be shunned and forsaken as the case may be. The evidence of its hazard to health is too great to be ignored.

Köberle quotes Luther as listing "gourmandizing" (gourmet: a lover of fine foods), excessive sleeping and loafing as threats to the Christian walk. Here we come to an area where it is difficult to be as dogmatic as one would like to be. We all assail gluttony or over-eating, but who is qualified to be the judge of the trespasser on this score? In an interview in *U.S. News and World Report* (Feb. 7, 1983), Dr. Wm. Bennet states that a study

EDITORIALS . . .

on eating habits revealed that the biggest eaters were among the lightest people. So for a person who has no weight problem and who can eat all he wants, and more than many others, to stand in judgment of someone else who doesn't necessarily overeat but still has a weight problem doesn't seem quite fair either, does it? But all will agree that to be much overweight isn't good.

Blessed is the person who likes simple food and is satisfied with that. Unfortunate, on the other hand, is the one who craves fine and rich foods to be happy.

What shall we say of Luther's "excessive sleeping" and loafing? In regard to the latter we are reminded of Sidney Swenson's motto, one of them: "If you don't have anything to do, don't do it here." Who shall be the judge of when another person has slept too much or one has "wasted" time? Some people need more sleep than others biologically, even as persons differ in their metabolism in regard to eating. But we would all agree that a person can get into the habit of lounging around too much. Let each one search his own heart whether or not he is at his best for the Lord and at the ready.

There they are, four often-mentioned temptations of the Scriptures: sins of the tongue, avarice or greed, impure thoughts, corruption of the body. Are we on guard for them? It is also in how a Christian meets these foes that the battle of spiritual life is won or lost.



TRIBUTE TO LUTHER

by Pastor Ray S. Persson

MISSIONS . . .

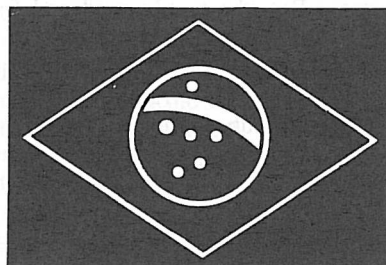
What despair would we be experiencing if our burden of sin was pressing us down and we did not know of cleansing through the blood of Christ? What agony would be tearing us apart if we did not know victory over death for both ourselves and our loved ones? Who can begin to describe the darkness of one's soul if Christ, the Light of the world, had not been permitted to shine in? We sing, "Lost in the night doth the heathen yet languish . . . Come and save us soon! Come and save us soon!" *We must mean it!* We must ask God to burden us for the lost and then do all that is our means to proclaim the Gospel to them.

In Paraguay our mission is still awaiting registration by the government. For reasons unknown to us God has not allowed this to happen yet. But we do see evidence that God has led us into this new work. It is my conviction that God will open the door and we will give Him all the glory.

I see this area as needing workers in the next decade. Our first outreach

"It is my conviction that God will open the door (Paraguay) and we will give Him all the glory."

is to the Portuguese-speaking Brazilians who are settling in this area of Paraguay. They are drawn there by the many jobs provided because of the hydroelectric construction along the Parana River. Pastor and Mrs. Charles Knapp will continue to build loving relationships with these new settlers and share God's Word with them. Once this work is established



Brazil

then our interests in Paraguay will be divided between this aspect of the work and the Guarani Indians, the major Indian group in Paraguay.

Our oldest field in which we work is Brazil. Our goal from the early days of our AFLC, as established at Annual Conference, was to establish six missionary couples on this field, a goal yet to be reached. We need to pray forth dedicated workers. We praise the Lord for George and Helen Knapp, Connely and Carolyn Dyrud, and David and Janet Abel who all minister at our Bible Institute headquarters at Campo Mourao, Brazil. Miss Priscilla Wold hopes to return soon after her leave of absence here in the U.S., because of health needs of her parents. We praise the Lord for the ministry of John and Ruby Abel in Curitiba, Brazil. We ask for prayer on their behalf and on behalf of our national pastors and Bible Institute students. Our emphases in the next decade will continue to the church planting. We want to train national workers to take over the leadership of their churches so that our missionaries may then establish

In observance of the 500th Anniversary of Luther's birth it would seem appropriate and mutually enriching for the people of our Churches to share testimony of blessings derived from the influence and teaching of the great Reformer. We are a people schooled and nurtured in spiritual dogma enunciated by one who was instrumental in freeing us from the terrible bondage of Rome.

The issues separating our beloved Church from the Roman Church yet remain as they were in the time of Luther. The ecumenists of our time would advocate a vigorous study of the Scriptures jointly regarding our conflicting views endeavoring to effect reconciliation and reunion with the "woman sitting on the seven hills" (Rev. 17:9). Such is to be regarded as an exercise in futility in that all the issues have been scripturally resolved by those faithful Reformers who labored so diligently in producing the *Augsburg Confession*

and the *Book of Concord*. All of those scriptural truths relating to our justification were rejected at the Council of Trent, as they are unto this present time.

Personally, I give tribute to Luther as one who greatly revered the Word of God. Those who manifest a love for God's Word have been the greatest blessing to my life. It is the Word alone over and above the traditions of Rome.

Secondly, we thank God for the tremendous teaching of being justified by faith alone without any merit of good works. This great truth did not come to me personally through the teaching of Luther but rather expressly through the Word of God (Romans 4:5). Actually I do not know of or have not met anyone claiming the experience of conversion through the writings of Luther. (Wesley is held in question in this regard.) I would like to hear of those who by such writings were so im-

measurably blest. However, it is to be acknowledged that the fact of the Lutheran Church preaching the true Word of God was the vehicle whereby enlightenment came to my heart and thereby the experience is related to Luther as in the experience of those so blest in being kept in a baptismal covenant.

Thirdly, I do thank the Lord for the emphasis of Luther regarding the priesthood of all believers whereby the tyrannical usurpation of ecclesiastical powers has been overthrown and there is the blessed freedom to proclaim the precious Gospel in the glorious ministry.

Of all the blessings derived from Luther, and they are manifold, it is with great sadness that I recount his scurrilous, vituperative words towards the Jew (Martin Luther: *Von den Juden und ihren Lügen* 1543).

For this before the face of the persecuted Jew, I would hold my head in shame.



Mexico

new churches.

These are trying times for *Mexico* because of the economic situation there. The people are experiencing hardships. The fervent desire of the national church and ours also is that God would raise up laborers from among their own people who will go out and establish new congregations. I trust that the work at both León and Celeya will continue to grow. I trust that our people here in the U.S. will sense a growing concern to assist financially. We praise the Lord for the dedicated pastoral leadership of Rev. Samuel Flores, layman Milton Flores, and other dedicated members

of our congregations in Mexico. It would be wonderful if God would call someone from our midst to work along with our brothers and sisters in the Mexican church.

In *India* it is our great privilege to have numerous dedicated Christian pastors, evangelists and Bible women working with us. The potential is great. Many Christian workers are approaching us with the desire of affiliating with us. Our concern as a World Missions Committee is for the training of these pastors and leaders. It is our hope to see Pastor Bushana

Rao Dasari return to India by 1986 as the on-the-field director for our Bible Faith Lutheran Church in India. Pastor Dasari is presently working on his doctoral studies at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. We praise the Lord for our fine Indian workers. We anticipate soon having the necessary funds to provide for both the orphanage work and a needed BFLC headquarters' facilities and school in that vast country. We will establish the orphanage when the funds are supplied for that purpose. This orphanage will be under the supervision of the BFLC.

God has great things in store for us in this next decade! Let us willingly offer ourselves as His witnesses both here in our homeland and across the earth. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Join me in concern for world missions as we travel through this decade: **FULL SPEED AHEAD!**



India

"And he (Pilate) entered into the Praetorium again and saith unto Jesus, Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore saith unto him, Speakest Thou not unto me? knowest Thou not that I have power to release Thee, and have power to crucify Thee? Jesus answered him, Thou wouldest have no power against Me, except it were given thee from above. Therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath greater sin."

BEHOLD, THE MAN!

A. Fibiger

The two are standing facing each other a second time within the Praetorium away from the multitude. Nevertheless there is a great difference between the two meetings. The first time, Jesus spoke willingly with him and tried to reach his heart; but this time He is silent. Pilate would not submit to Him, even if He did tell him from whence He was

Pilate is offended. He draws himself up in all his dignity and in his blunt, official pride, threatens Him. He boasts of his power, he who did not even have the power of following his own convictions. "He says that he has power to crucify Jesus—thereby he wanted to intimidate Him, and power to release Him—thereby He wanted to cajole Him" (Quisling). Then Jesus again speaks and reminds Pilate of his dependence upon a higher power. It is this scene which Munkaczy has portrayed in his well-known painting. There is a kingly sublimity about Jesus as He stands there and rebukes His judge. Pilate prates about his power, but Jesus reminds him of his responsibility. He weighs His judge in the balance of God and says; You are but an instrument in the hands of Caiaphas and Judas, and therefore they have the greater sin than you.

Scriptures often speak of a "greater condemnation" which will befall those who have had the greater responsibility, e.g., the Pharisees,

Mark 12:40; the cities in which His mighty works had been done, Matthew 11:20-24; and the servants who know their Lord's will, but do not do according to it, Luke 12:47, 48.

And we who live in a blessed time when the Word of God is preached in its purity have greater responsibility than those who lived in the period of rationalism when unbelief and spiritual death shrouded the countries. You who have grown up in a Christian home, and who have received your instruction for confirmation from a believing pastor, and who sit in church Sunday after Sunday under the preaching of the living Word, you have a greater responsibility than he who was lulled to sleep in an unbelieving home where oaths and scoffing were the only evening devotion, and who since then have never met living Christianity. For "to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required" (Luke 12:48).

The knights of old generally had a chaplain, and when they came home from their looting expeditions and had ravaged with fire and the sword with a vengeance, they felt the need of being thoroughly flayed in their chapel; and they were not satisfied with merely the chastening of the Word either. The chaplain was a stalwart fellow who did not hesitate to flay them with his lash. These coarse

fellows felt a peculiar inner gratification in doing penance in such a very evident manner, for then afterwards they could with good conscience go in and drink themselves "decently drunk" while making plans for new raids. These fellows of mediaeval times have some descendents in our day who delight in hearing a real hell-fire sermon and receiving a thorough berating in church. The more heavily it is laid on, the better. And then when they have let themselves be thoroughly shaken up and have felt the pangs of hell shoot through the soul, they feel pleasantly relieved and keep on living in their sins.

But know this that each time you hear the Word of God preached in Spirit and in truth, it is the Lord's purpose to help you to a whole-hearted repentance and to a true and living faith. And if you will not in earnest humble yourself and take refuge with the grace of God in Christ, then your responsibility will be so much greater, and your doom that more severe.

Caiaphas and Judas acted against their better convictions; therefore Jesus says that they have "greater sin" than Pilate. But as He reminds him that he is responsible to God for the power he has received from above, and thus "before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession" (I Timothy 6:13), He extends a saving hand to him through the same word. At the same time as He sits in judgment on His judge, He seeks to save him.

It is the only time in the close of the story of Christ's passion that He speaks. But the insight we thereby get into His heart shows us that He accepts His judgment "from above." Therefore He can submit to the wretch who judged Him. It is the mind of Gethsemane which still continues to live in Him, that obedience in which He receives the cup from His Father's hand, even when it is offered Him by a Pilate.

There is a blessing in looking into His heart. What a mind there was in Him! God grant that we may be like Him and follow Him in holy purity, in obedience, and in faith!

Behold, the man!

—The Lutheran Messenger

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Can we not get along without doctrine?

It has been pointed out that one of the most serious evils connected with unionism is the tendency to doctrinal indifference. No doubt many readers mentally asked, as many young people have inquired out loud, "Is that so serious? Can we not get along without doctrine?"

There are many people who think we can. Indeed, it is one of the outstanding characteristics of present-day religious attitudes to belittle and condemn definite doctrinal positions in religion. Men are crying out against dogmas, doctrines and creeds as if these were chief enemies of the human race. Critics seem never to tire in their tirades against definite formulations of religious faith.

This is a strange phenomenon. We may well ask what is the cause of it.

No doubt some reason for this attitude can be discovered in the propensity for over-fineness of definitions found in certain religious circles, by which a religious tenet is so meticulously and pointedly stated that there is no room to stand on the ground taken but for the definer himself.

Another cause may be found in the tendency to stress doctrine as all important to the exclusion of emphasis on life. But the more basic reasons for the anti-creed attitude are to be found in two other phases of current religious thought.

The one is the fashion of defining religion in terms of experience only. Men say, It doesn't matter what you think in your head about religious truths. What matters is what you experience in your heart.

Now experience is important—in fact absolutely essential, if religion is going to function. A person may know all the facts of Christian history and have intellectually mastered a complete system of Christian doc-

trine and yet not be a Christian. His heart must be transformed by the Spirit of God before he can truly be a child of God. Experience is therefore an essential part of personal Christianity, and nothing should be said or done to minimize its importance.

But heart experience is not all there is to personal Christianity. There is a head part, too. In fact, the head part is so basic that you simply cannot have the heart part without it. Let us look at this matter a little more closely.

In I Cor. 15:3-4 Paul says: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

Now here we have a statement of doctrine, a dogma, a part of our creed, if you please. In fact, this is the central doctrinal statement of the Christian system. Now, I ask, can you get along without this doctrine? Can you have Christian experience without it? Can you believe in the forgiveness of sin in a Christian sense unless you have been intellectually taught that Christ died for your sins? Can you have a victorious Christian faith unless you have been taught that Christ rose from the dead? The only possible answer is that Christian experience is impossible without a certain amount of knowledge of this Christian doctrine. We could go through the entire creed of the Church and show how at every point Christian experience is more or less vitally tied up to doctrine.

And why should not a church body

"And why should not a church body make clear where it stands?"

make clear where it stands? Every movement or organization that amounts to anything sets forth clearly the principles on which it builds. Every little social or political club has its constitution which sets forth its aims, objectives and conditions of membership. Why should not then an organization such as the church with a program of eternal significance for precious souls have a constitution? That is essentially what a creed is. If anywhere we should expect an organization to set forth clearly its positions so men may know what it stands for, it would seem to be a church body. Without a creed religion becomes a vague, indefinable indefiniteness that in the long run is utterly incapable of satisfying the religious needs of anybody. It is therefore not by accident that there is a reaction today in religion which manifests itself in an insistent demand for positive and definite statements of faith. Men have been floundering about in a sea of uncertainty and are now crying aloud for solid ground upon which to get a foothold. Men are discovering their supreme need of definite convictions in religion.

There is another reason for opposition to doctrine. When closely examined, the modern hostility to creed is found to be directed not against all doctrine, but against particular doctrines, especially those associated with the redemptive character of Christianity. Modernism also has its doctrines. The tenets of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, for instance, it clings to with as much tenacity as ever characterized the most dogmatic eras of the Church. But to the doctrines of the blood atonement of Jesus Christ modernism is bitterly opposed and never tires of registering its hostility. This is usually what is meant when creed is attacked.

It is not necessary to say much in reply to this attitude. To oppose the creedal statements that have to do

◇

news of the churches

from here and there

Stacy, Minn. — The Lenten services at Sunnyside Lutheran and Hope Lutheran, Wyoming, are being held under the theme "You Were Bought with a Price." Each week the service is held at Sunnyside on Wednesday night and at Hope on Thursday night.

Minnewaukan, N. Dak. — The parish took part in the youth retreat at Ramada Inn, Moorhead, Minn., Feb. 4-5. Rev. John Rieth, Williston, N. Dak., was the guest speaker and Mrs. Curtis Emerson, Valley City, N. Dak., provided special music.

Underwood, Minn. — Rev. R. Snipstead, president of the AFLC, dedicated the addition to Tordenskjold Lutheran Church recently and brought the sermon at the worship service. A fellowship dinner followed the service.

Thief River Falls, Minn. — The male quartette "Four Him" presented the program at the Family Night on February 20 at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church.

Badger, Minn. — Sunday School resumed at Oiland Lutheran, Greenbush, on February 20 with a Mission Sunday.

Badger Creek and Oiland Churches are participating in the district round robin of Lenten services. Taking part are Pastors G. Nordvall, J. Jacobson, B. Rygh, L. Severson, L. Haagen-son, and R. Huglen. The theme for the services is "With Him All the Way."

Roseau, Minn. — From the Lamplighter parish paper for February: Take a glass and an eyedropper. Put in 168 drops of clear water (the number of hours in a week) and then drop 4 drops (or 3 or 2 or 1, depending upon how many hours a week you spend at church services and with God) of ink or food coloring. The paleness of the color will tell you something about your spiritual life. Spend the greater part of those 168 hours in *prayer, Bible study and pursuit of God* and your spiritual life will take on new color!—Selected

Minneapolis, Minn. — A Sweethearts' Banquet for Rosedale and Faith Lutheran Churches was held on Sunday evening, February 13, at Viking Village Restaurant in south Minneapolis. A slide program with a spiritual emphasis about a trip through the Rocky Mountains was presented after dinner.

Kalispell, Mont. — "Finlandia—1983" was the theme for the annual congregational progressive dinner for Faith Lutheran Church recently. Lihamurekepiiras (meat pie with sour cream crust) was the main dish served. Leena Kytosaho, a 17-year old exchange student from Finland showed slides and told about her country. Lois Thielen read the poem, "A Finnish Christian."

The annual Sweetheart Banquet for Stillwater and Faith Churches was held at the Sizzler Cafe on February 15. Malibu chicken and sirloin steak were served.

Ferndale, Wash.—The Chapelaairs Quartette presented a concert at Triumph Lutheran on February 6 at 6 o'clock.

LIFE . . .

with the blood atonement is to oppose the very essence of historic Christianity. It is to oppose those very things in Christianity which give a ground of hope to a repentant sinner. If such doctrines are abolished, we have abolished at the same time the heart of evangelical Christianity.

No, we cannot get along without doctrine. Christianity is based upon an order of facts, and upon the doctrinal statements of the meaning of those facts the whole structure of Christian faith and life is built.

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

Next time: Should a Christian Belong to a Lodge

1983 AFLBS CHORAL CLUB ITINERARY

Thurs., March 24	Bethany Lutheran Church
7:30 p.m.	Astoria, Ore.
Fri., March 25	Spencer Creek Lutheran Church
7:30 p.m.	Eugene, Ore.
Sat., March 26	Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
7:30 p.m.	Kirkland, Wash.
Sun., March 27	Atonement Lutheran Church
11:00 a.m.	Arlington, Wash.
Sun., March 27	Calvary Lutheran Church
5:00 p.m.	Everett, Wash.
Mon., March 28	Free day in Seattle
Tues., March 29	Triumph Lutheran Church
7:30 p.m.	Ferndale, Wash.
Wed., March 30	Elim Lutheran Church
7:00 p.m.	Lake Stevens, Wash.
Thurs., March 31	Return to Minneapolis by air

The Choral Club, making its first tour to the West Coast District, is directed by Mr. Don Rodvold. Accompanying the group are Pastor and Mrs. Amos Dyrud.

IRS ends double tax break for clergy members

With the help of federal tax laws, the Rev. Susan DeVogel bought a house last April in south Minneapolis.

Now, the Internal Revenue Service is ending a double tax break it granted members of the clergy 21 years ago. DeVogel said the change will cost her more than \$2,000.

That increase is not unusual, said New York tax attorney Philip Temple. He estimates the change could raise the annual federal taxes of clergy who own homes by \$1,000 to \$2,000.

And it could affect financially pressed congregations asked to make up the difference, said Temple, who represents such denominations as the American Baptist Church, Seventh Day Adventists and Assemblies of God.

Since 1962, the IRS hasn't taxed any housing allowance allotted to members of the clergy by their congregations, and on top of that, has allowed them to deduct mortgage interest and real estate taxes. But in

January the IRS said that all that has ended.

Beginning with returns filed next year, clergy members will be allowed to deduct only the amount of mortgage interest and real estate taxes that exceeds the portion of their tax-free housing allowance that applies to those two items, said Bill Knight, IRS spokesman in St. Paul.

An exception is made for those whose employment contracts with their congregation extend into 1983. They will continue to get the double benefit until their contracts expire or until June 30, 1983, meaning some could get the benefit up to half a year, Knight said.

If Minnesota makes corresponding changes in state tax law, which it is likely to do, that would cost members of the clergy about \$60 to \$240, said Dan L. Bane, a St. Paul certified public accountant who prepares tax returns for a number of members of the clergy.

"It'll affect us greatly," said DeVogel, pastor of Hobart United Methodist Church at 100 West 46th St. While she and her husband, Ray, both work, DeVogel said they live frugally in order to make a mortgage payment of more than \$1,000 a month.

Nevertheless, DeVogel was one of eight local ministers who said eliminating the double benefit is fair. "As much as it hurts me, this is the way most people live," she said.

"Ministers have gotten a double tax benefit for 21 years that they probably never should have gotten," said Manfred Holck Jr., a certified public accountant and Lutheran minister in Austin Texas, who writes two newsletters dealing with clergy finances. And a substantial number will see their net incomes drop as a result of the change, he said.

"My guess is about 30 percent of all clergy own their own home," said Holck, former comptroller for the board of pensions for Lutheran Church in America (LCA).

More than 50 percent of LCA pastors receive housing allowances, which most apply to homes they own, said Paul Dahlberg, comptroller

of the LCA pension board. But in the largely rural American Lutheran Church and the United Methodist Church, probably less than a third own their own homes and will be affected by the change.

The change will be especially hard on pastors nearing retirement and young ministers, whose incomes and savings are limited, said the Rev. Richard Harper, United Methodist superintendent for Minneapolis and its suburbs.

"I guess the part that makes me a bit sorry is for somebody who has lived in a parsonage; this lessens the possibility of them getting their own home," Harper said. "That becomes crucial when the clergy person dies—their spouse loses not only their loved one, but a place to live. That's a scary thought."

In addition, ministers said parsonage living is sometimes uncomfortable. It means calling someone in the congregation to make repairs, consulting the church before painting the walls, having no sense of permanence.

"We pastors have been gypsies, serving a brief period of time in each congregation. So the housing allowance has been helpful to pastors to build some kind of equity," said Pastor Ralph Larson of Bethany Lutheran Church, 3901 36th Av. S.

Salaries for ministers have traditionally been low, considering their years of education and experience, and that is the reason Congress permitted the double tax break in the first place, Temple said.

The average salary for ministers in the United Methodist church is \$18,000 a year, Foster said. Its higher for Lutheran ministers—\$23,500.

"Some congregations have kept their pastors' salaries low and inflated the housing allowance as a way of increasing take-home dollars without putting extra burden on the church," DeVogel said. The IRS change will force congregations and pastors to look at the total compensation package, she said.

—*Minneapolis Star and Tribune*

Personalities

Deborah Abel, oldest daughter of Rev. and Mrs. John H. Abel, was united in marriage to Fred Gill on January 7 in Curitiba, Brazil, by her father. Deborah is a medical student. God's blessing on the new couple.

New address for **Pastor and Mrs. R. S. Persson**, temporarily without call, is 2143 W. 12th St., Eugene, Ore. 97402.

Preaching missions

Dalton, Minn.

Zion Lutheran Church

Merle Fagerberg, lay pastor

March 20-24

Ev. Philip Hanson, LEM, speaker

Newfolden, Minn.

Westaker Lutheran Church

Larry Haagenson, pastor

March 20-24

Rev. Bruce Dalager, Grand Forks, N. Dak., speaker

Thief River Falls Conference held

The 21st annual Winter Bible Conference, upper midwest section, was held at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Thief River Falls, Minn., Leslie Galland, pastor, Feb. 2-5. The conference was well attended with people coming from North Dakota and South Dakota, as well as Minnesota.

The theme for the conference was "A Life That Pleases God," Ephesians 5:10. The theme song was "Living for Jesus."

The Bible teacher was Rev. Kenneth D. Moland, Dean of Association Free Lutheran Bible School in Minneapolis. His studies were in Ephesians 1-3.

Lay Pastor Walter Beaman, McIntosh, Minn., brought the evening messages. He spoke of the need to build bridges of love to others so that Christ might walk across them. We are to run well, serving one another in love. We need to learn to walk before we can run, he said. We won't walk in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5) until we empty ourselves of the deeds of the flesh. Pastor Beaman called attention to the words, "See how they love the brethren," and reminded his audience that such a fact and testimony will build God's kingdom on earth.

Four talks were given by area pastors from Ephesians 5. Lay Pastor Burton Rygh, Greenbush, Minn., spoke on "A Walk in Love" (1-2); Rev. Larry Haagenson, Newfolden, Minn., considered "A Walk in Purity" (3-7); Rev. Dennis O'Neil, Shevlin, Minn., developed the subject, "A Walk in Light" (8-14); and Lay Pastor Gustav Nordvall, Roseau, Minn., brought a message on "A Careful Walk" (15-20). A concluding talk was given by Mr. David Grothe, Thief River Falls.

On Friday afternoon the Women's Misisonary Federation held a banquet and workshop at the church beginning at 5 o'clock. Approximately 150 ladies attended the banquet.

Some of the men at the conference

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on Friday, about 50 of them, ate dinner that evening at the Rex Cafe in downtown Thief River Falls and heard informal presentations by Rev. Richard Snipstead, president of the AFLC, and Pastor Moland, on the work of the church.

At the Friday night service a group of young people, mostly from Our Saviour's Church, presented a drama with music called "Letters to Timothy." It was written and directed by Miss Eunice Rokke.

Come to the Luther
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Sky country of Montana
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Lodging and Sessions on
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"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself" (John 12:32). Jesus was lifted up from the earth in crucifixion. The evangelist calls upon his hearers to behold the Savior slain for their sins and to believe in Him. Here are Pastor Kenneth Pentti's coming appointments.

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.

MINNESOTA

Roseau

John Abrahamson, 72, Jan. 3, Spruce

Seth Gustafson, 89, Jan. 10, Roseau

Edward Olson, 77, Jan. 17, Roseau

Greenbush

Benard Anderson, 70, Jan. 29, Bethlehem

John Langas, 92, Jan. 31, Bethlehem

(John Langaas was a member of the famed "Lost Battalion" in the Argonne, France, in World War I.)