

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

November 20, 1984

ADVENT: THE LORD COMES!

Photo by Roger C. Huebner, D.D.S.

AT THE MASTER'S FEET



Lay Pastor Gustav Nordvall

Advent

"Come, Thou long expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart."

(Concordia, 120)

"Advent" is derived from the Latin word for coming. Through the centuries the promise of the coming Messiah was repeated in the Old Testament. It came first to Adam and Eve. A Redeemer would come!

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Before his death Jacob gathered his sons around his bed for his words of farewell. He prophesied that Judah should be the royal tribe and that Christ should be born of Judah. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49:10). Shiloh means one who is peace and brings peace. It is one of the names of Christ.

Many of the Psalms in part speak of the coming Messiah. Isaiah's proclamation has become very familiar: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord."

What hope these promises of a Savior brought and what positive joy they bring to us today!

In Luke, we learn of a righteous and devout man, Simeon, who waited for the consolation of Israel. His joy was complete when he beheld the infant Jesus. "Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." We, too, can depart in peace, having met the Savior.

Anna, the prophetess, gave thanks unto the Lord and spoke of him to all those who "looked for redemption" in Jerusalem.

The honorable counselor, Joseph of Arimathea, who later asked for the body of Christ, is described as one who waited for the kingdom of God. So we see examples of people, described as "just and righteous" trust-

ing in the future Messiah while offering, in faith, sacrifices for their sins.

Advent Now

The four weeks of Advent can be a time of spiritual renewal, a time to deepen our commitment to follow Christ, and a time to look forward to the commemoration of the birth of Christ on earth.

In the ninth and tenth centuries, Advent's meaning was broadened to include the expectation of the Second Coming of Christ.

A meaningful Advent can lead to a more meaningful celebration of Christmas. There are many plans and helps available to the Christian family today with excellent suggestions as to how the family can plan a day by day observance of the Advent season.

We use the Advent wreath in our home as well as in the churches. It symbolizes the period of waiting for Jesus' coming. The candles are placed in a circle, meaning eternity and the continuing presence of God. As the candles are lit one by one, one more each week that goes by, the family can share in a time of devotion and meditation.

A little time set aside each day can be a joyful and meaningful experience as we draw near to the Lord and live in the hope of His return.

"Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until it receives the early and the late rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand" (James 5:7-8, RSV).

For what offices was Jesus anointed and consecrated?

The offices of High Priest, Prophet and King.

Three pastors of the church discuss these offices of Jesus in this issue.



by Rev. Ted Berkas
Granite Falls, Minn.

If one goes back to the old theology book, he will find it spelled out somewhat in the wording of a by-gone era, but contained therein is the summary statement of our redemption in Christ:

"The redemption of the human race is the spiritual, judicial, and most costly deliverance of all men, bound in the chains of sin, from guilt, from the wrath of God, and temporal and eternal punishment, accomplished by Christ, the God-man, through His active and passive obedience, which God, the most righteous judge, kindly accepted as a most perfect ransom, so that the human race, introduced into spiritual liberty, may live forever with God" (David Hollaz, 1646-1713).

Translated into a basic Sunday School concept we learned as children, the above statement says, "Jesus died for my sins." And because He died and rose again he brought reconciliation with a just and Holy God. And that is what makes Jesus the Priest and that is what makes Him so precious to the believer. Guilt needed to be removed, a ransom needed to be paid; an equivalent needed to be rendered for the offenses committed; satisfaction needed to be met—and Jesus, our great High Priest, willingly fulfilled that need.

Because Jesus was a good man, perfect in all His ways and in His keeping of the Law, and because

Jesus Our High Priest

Jesus was Divine Being, His sacrificing of Himself for the transgressions of mankind satisfied God's requirement of justice.

No small thing that, for sin separated me from God by an enormous chasm. An infinite God was offended by sin, and because sin is an offense, wrong and crime against an infinite God, it deserves infinite punishment, and therefore required an infinite price of satisfaction for which Christ alone, having the infinite nature, could bring about the satisfaction.

As our Priest, Christ declares us accepted in the beloved, the Good Shepherd has lain down His life for the sheep, in Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins. Believe that, and the Cross becomes tremendously significant. The old chorus says it well:

"Sing, oh sing of my Redeemer!
With His blood He purchased me;
On the cross He sealed my pardon,
Paid the debt and made me free."

The fracture having been mended by the healing touch of Jesus, the rehabilitation continues under the care of His continuing intercession on my

"No small thing that, for sin separated me from God by an enormous chasm."

HE DIED FOR ME, LIVES FOR ME

behalf with the Heavenly Father. A duty of a priest is to pray for his people. Pastors in a congregation ought to spend much time and thought in concentrated prayer for their people. How good to know that Jesus prays for all. "Intercession is nothing else than the application and continual force, as it were, of redemption, perpetually winning favor with God."

The saving work of Christ was in one sense completed at the cross, but in another sense it continues in its unfolding as, one by one, individuals come to a saving faith in Christ. "Consequently He is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through Him, since he always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). Just think, today, this very hour, Jesus is praying that you will be kept and brought home to the blessings of eternal life with God. You have a representative appearing in the very presence of God to speak there on your behalf. Jesus understands the temptations and the ups and downs you face here on earth. He sympathizes and He pleads with the Father for you. What a loving, faithful Savior! What a dedicated Priest we have!

And since so much has been provided and such an on-going concern is daily being demonstrated on Christ's part on my behalf, then what kind of response ought there to be





by Rev. Peter Franz,
Minot, N. Dak.

In this article we want to look at the second office mentioned – the Prophetic Office of Christ.

The Prophecies

Without a doubt, the Bible was given to us as the revelation of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ. That is why Luther often said that everywhere we look, in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, we see Jesus. In Luke 24:44, Jesus Himself said, "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

Now, notice that Jesus gives three divisions of the Old Testament in this verse and tells us that all three of these divisions speak of Him. The Law of Moses speaks of Him, the Prophets speak of Him, and the Psalms speak of Him, and they all tell us that Christ would be a prophet.

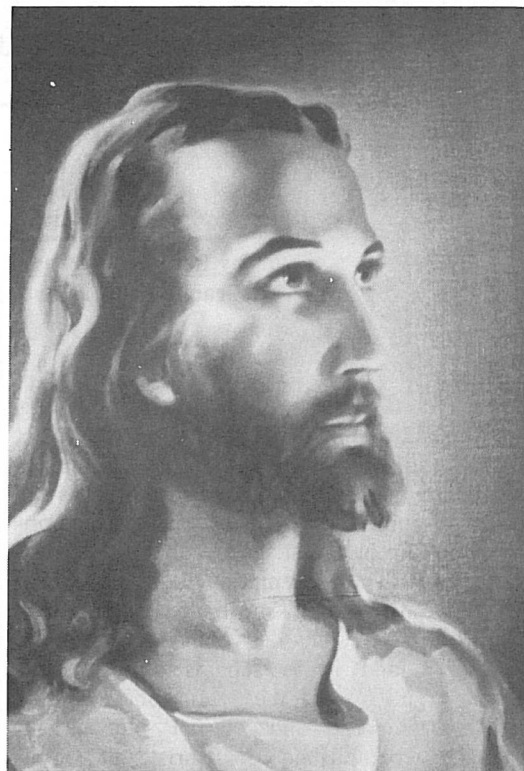
First of all, *the Law of Moses* prophesied that Christ would be a prophet of God. In Deuteronomy 18:18-19, the Lord said to Moses, "I

will raise up for them (the Israelites) a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put My words in His mouth, and He will tell them everything I command Him. If anyone does not listen to My words that the prophet speaks in My name I myself will call him to account." Certainly, this is a clear reference to Christ. Jesus was a Jew, He was like Moses, He spoke only what the Father told Him to speak, and the Father promised to judge all who fail to listen to His message.

Secondly, *the Prophets* prophesied that Christ would be a prophet of God. Perhaps one of the most well known prophecies of Christ's prophetic office is in Isaiah 61:1: "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor." We know that this is a prophecy about Jesus because the New Testament confirms it in Luke 4:18-19.

Thirdly, *the Psalms* prophesy that Christ would be a prophet of God. One example is from Psalm 22. Verse 22 says, "I will declare Your name to my brothers, in the congregation I will praise You." Here it is stated that one of the purposes of Jesus' coming to earth was to declare the name of the Father to men.

Without a doubt, then, it was prophesied that Christ would carry out the office of a Prophet.



"The Law of Moses speaks of Him, the Prophets speak of Him, and the Psalms speak of Him . . .

HIGH PRIEST . . .

forthcoming from me? The Catechism lays out this objective: "Christ has redeemed me in order that I might be His own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness."

How does one begin in such an undertaking? May I suggest three ways in which to respond toward the goodness of Jesus as demonstrated through His priestly office.

First, consider yourself, by the grace of God, a child of the King, an heir of the promise, accepted in the beloved. "Now I belong to Jesus

– Jesus belongs to me." You are no longer your own, you have been bought with a price, a child of a Heavenly Father. Allow that declaration of who you are in Christ to permeate your being. "I am His and He is mine – forever."

Secondly, since you are now living under Him in His kingdom, seek to discover it in all its rich righteousness; let His work your pleasure be, set your minds on things above, and by the grace of the direction of the Holy Spirit, deprive of power the evil desires lurking in your members – all that is earthly in you and employed in sin: sexual vice, impurity, sensual appetites, unholy desires, and

all greed and covetousness. "Give it all, give it all, give it all to Jesus." In a word, repent of your sins and believe in Him.

Thirdly, serve Him in that area which seems most evident and appropriate for you at just this time. Serve Him with gladness, serve Him with a cleansed mind, serve Him with diligence and creativity and renewed application, serve Him by being forgiving and gentle as He has forgiven you, serve Him who has fashioned and formed you and placed you in a strategic spot for you to be a blessing to someone else. Serve Him because He has redeemed you, He has called you by name, you are His.

The Proclamation

In view of the fact that it was prophesied that Christ would be a prophet, it is no surprise to see that when He came to earth He was proclaimed to be a prophet. We see Christ proclaimed to be a prophet in two ways.

First of all, *Christ Himself* proclaimed that He was a prophet of God. When He was teaching in His hometown of Nazareth, and the people took offense at Him, He said, "Only in His home town, among His relatives and in His own house is a prophet without honor" (Mark 6:4). As Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem to be crucified, He said, "I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day - for surely no prophet can die outside of Jerusalem" (Luke 13:33). Here we see very clearly that Christ saw Himself as the Prophet of God. He knew it was prophesied that He would be a prophet and that's what He proclaimed Himself to be.

But secondly, *the people* proclaimed that Jesus was a prophet. When Jesus raised a widow's son at Nain, the people said, "A great prophet has appeared among us . . . God has come to help His people" (Luke 7:16). When Jesus met the woman at the well and He revealed to her His knowledge of her past, she said, "Sir . . . I can see that You are a prophet" (John 4:19). When Jesus fed the five thousand, the people recognized that He was the fulfillment of the prophecy the Lord made to Moses in Deuteronomy 18 because "They began to say, 'Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world'" (John 6:14). And when Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday riding on a donkey, the whole city wondered who He was, "The crowds answered, 'This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth'" (Matthew 21:11).

The people clearly recognized that Jesus was a prophet, and that is what they proclaimed Him to be.

The Portrayal

Now if Jesus was a prophet sent by God, what was His message? How did He proclaim it? And how did the people respond to it?

One of the most beautiful portrayals of Christ as prophet is when He

spoke to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus after the resurrection. As Jesus met these men they were discussing all that had happened in Jerusalem. So Jesus asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" One of them said, "Are you the only one living in Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have happened there in these days?" Jesus wanted them to share more so He said, "What things?" And they said, "About Jesus of Nazareth. He was a prophet in word and deed, before God and all the people." Then they went on to explain to Jesus what had happened and how His death had destroyed their hope. They said, "We had hoped that He was going to redeem Israel, but now He is dead."

At this point Jesus reproved them for their unbelief. "He said to them, 'How foolish you are, and how slow of heart that you do not believe all that the prophets have spoken.'" "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself" (Luke 24:25,27).

Isn't it amazing that although they proclaimed Jesus to be a prophet (v.19), they didn't really listen to what He said? Jesus had told His disciples many times that He was going to die and rise again, but they didn't believe Him. *They proclaimed Him to be a prophet but they didn't listen to what He said.*

I wonder how many people whom we know do the same thing. Maybe even we ourselves are doing the same today. We believe that Jesus was the Prophet of God. We believe that all He said was true. *But we've never really listened to what He said.* Is that what you are doing today?

When God told Moses that Jesus would be a prophet like him, God said, "You must listen to Him" (Deuteronomy 18:19). And that is what we must do today. It's not enough to believe that Jesus was a prophet. Many people who are lost in sin believe that. We must also listen to what Jesus has to say. Are you listening to what Jesus has to say? I hope so. He has a message that you need to hear, and He was sent by God to give it.

Jesus our King

THE KING REVEALS HIS KINGDOM



by Rev. Carl Hort,
Brooten, Minn.

Luke 17:20-30

From the beginning of Scripture to the end of it, many, many times, the kingdom of God is mentioned. Centuries before the birth of Jesus, the Jews were aware of the idea of God's kingdom. During the Old Testament times, one might even say that Israel was God's earthly kingdom, and God used her in many ways to do His will.

In the New Testament there seems to be an even greater stress on the kingdom of God. John the Baptist began his ministry with the cry: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Likewise, Jesus Himself, immediately following His baptism and temptation in the wilderness, said: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand". Other places the kingdom is mentioned in the Gospels: "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field;" "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed," and the like. And when our Savior was asked by His disciples to teach them to pray, among other things He taught them to pray, "Thy kingdom come."

Many definitions of the kingdom of God might be given. It would seem to be generally true that it is the rule of God in people, brought about by Jesus Christ. But in order that we may better understand these all-important matters about the kingdom of God, let us study our text in Luke's Gospel, where: ✠

The King reveals His kingdom

I. The Kingdom is Misunderstood by the Pharisees.

Luke writes that Jesus "was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come." The Pharisees were vitally interested in this subject. Along with thousands of other Jews, they had looked forward to the fulfillment of God's promise to send a Messiah, a Deliverer, who should release them from bondage and restore Israel, as they thought, to some of the glory of its past. And in view of the many repeated references which Jesus made to His Kingdom, it seems quite fair that they should ask their question.

Jesus was introduced by John the Baptist as the fulfillment of God's promise of a Messiah. The Pharisees observed with interest how the establishment of His kingdom would develop. It soon became clear, however, that they were not waiting for the kind of a Messiah that Jesus was. What they wanted was not a spiritual kingdom. They had largely forgotten the true nature of God's kingdom of old. They could think only of another kingdom with a powerful ruling king like David, one who would go to battle and break the bonds of their enemies, giving them status and honor among their neighbors.

Thus it was that Jesus and the manner in which He was to establish His kingdom had no appeal to them at all. They examined His program carefully. He had been born in Bethlehem and laid in a manger as an infant child. He grew up in the home of the humble carpenter Joseph and his wife Mary. Jesus Himself was trained to be a carpenter. There was no grand display of power on His part. He gathered no army and gave no sign of plans to deliver the nation from the enslavement of the Gentiles.

"... it (the kingdom) is the rule of God in people, brought about by Jesus Christ."

We can hear them laugh at the whole idea of a kingdom like this. "Who are these fishermen and tax collectors and other poorly educated men who surround You and follow You wherever You go, King Jesus? Are these princes in Your kingdom? And what of all this business of waiting on the needs of the sick and the afflicted and talking about some kind of peace with God? Where is Your kingdom, Jesus? We demand that You tell us about it, for we cannot see it."

Well, that is about what you would expect of those Pharisees, isn't it? We are not surprised at their attitude, and we are quite critical of it, too. But what is our idea of the kingdom in our day? Do we not also lay a great deal of stress on the outward appearances? Repeatedly the Christians of our time give evidence that they are concerned about acclaim and recognition and applause and prestige for their churches. It is not unusual to see them work very hard in connection with matters which they call "kingdom work" but which actually are concerned with things quite foreign to any thoughts of the kingdom and its function as Jesus pictured it.

II. The Kingdom is in the Midst of You Now.

Responding to the question of the Pharisees, Jesus said: "The kingdom of God comes not with observation, neither shall they say, 'Lo, here! or, Lo, there!' for behold, the kingdom of God is within you." The kingdom of God is in your midst right now.

"You cannot see the kingdom itself," Jesus states. It does not have an exact location, no earthly boundaries. It is not confined to any particular part of the world. Yet this kingdom is very real, and it is also very powerful. Jesus Himself has said, and we should never forget it: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The kingdom of God is everywhere that Jesus may be found and where His Gospel is preached. It is evident in the lives of men and women and children "whose eyes have seen the King." As a result

"Repeatedly the Christians of our time give evidence that they are concerned about acclaim and recognition and applause and prestige for their churches."

their lives have been changed. God rules in their hearts and they live as His loyal subjects. The kingdom of God is where those who know and love Jesus as their Savior are speaking to others of the great things God has done for them, trying with all their hearts to win some soul for Christ. The kingdom of God is where those who call themselves by the Master's name are found showing the Master's spirit in their everyday life.



They know that they have been redeemed, not with gold or silver but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent sufferings and death, that they might be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him. In such loving sacrifice and service they are busily engaged in bringing a little of the light of heaven and the peace of heaven into the countless darkened, burdened souls. In short, the kingdom of God is the church of Jesus Christ on earth where Jesus reigns as King, where men believe in Him for forgiveness and eternal Life, where His Word is preached in all its purity, and where the sacraments are administered according to His command.

Luther sums it up beautifully in the explanation of the second petition

of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come." "This happens," he says, "when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead a godly life here in time and hereafter in eternity."

The kingdom of God does not come with observation. In its true meaning you do not see it in records or figures or buildings or church organizations or any display of pomp or show. You cannot say, "Lo, here it is!" or, "Lo, there it is!" The kingdom of God is in the hearts of people like you and me who know and love and serve their Savior.

III. Its Final Form Will Be Established at His Second Coming

But here in this world we do not find the kingdom of God in its final

form. All who have given heed to the Savior's words have learned that His kingdom established in this world was to be of short and brief duration. He Himself has already ascended unto His heavenly kingdom, promising to prepare a place for us, and assuring us that "He will come again to receive us unto Himself, that where He is there we may be also!"

Even as He warned against false references to His earthly kingdom on the part of those who say, "Lo, here!" or, "Lo, there!" – so also He warns against those who will spread false rumors about His return at the Last Day to judge the world. Once he knows that a certain thing is to happen, man finds it difficult to wait patiently for the appointed time. So it is also with regard to Jesus' second coming. And false prophets take advantage of this situation, by confusing the issue, claiming that Judgment Day will come at this time or that time or that it has already come. "Don't you believe them," Jesus says. "When I come again, everyone will know it without any doubt. Of course, you will long to see that day of the Son of Man. As I must suffer many things, you, too, must suffer many things. But do not lose heart or patience in the meantime, and do not follow false prophets who try to guess My coming beforehand. My second coming will be in glory, with all the holy angels, and it will be 'as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven and shineth unto the other part under heaven.' Everyone will know when that day is here."

IV. We Also Prepare for Jesus' Second Coming

When will all of this take place? Nearly 2,000 years have passed since Jesus spoke to His disciples. But the signs of His second coming continue to appear. As in the days of Noah and of Lot, so in our day, the hearts of men are turning more and more to material things, and the vanities of this life. All of this should be a continual warning to us that we set our affections on things above and not on things on the earth.

THE KING SHALL COME WHEN MORNING DAWNS

*The King shall come when morning dawns,
And light triumphant breaks,
When beauty gilds the eastern hills,
And life to joy awakes.*

*Not as of old a little child
To bear, and bleed, and die,
But crowned with glory like the sun
That lights the morning sky.*

*O brighter than the rising morn
When He, victorious, rose,
And left the lonesome place of death,
Despite the rage of foes;
O brighter than the glorious morn
Shall this fair morning be,
When Christ, our King, in beauty comes,
And we His face shall see.*

*The King shall come when morning dawns,
And earth's dark night is past;
O haste the rising of that morn,
The day that aye shall last,
And let the endless bliss begin,
By weary saints foretold,
When right shall triumph over wrong,
And truth shall be extolled.*

From the Greek, Translated by
John Brownlie (*The Junior Hymnal*)

LUDWIG HOFACKER

By Rolf Scheffbuch
(Translated by Pastor Edward A. Johnson,
Lincoln, Nebr.)

Today it is clear: God gave this man Ludwig Hofacker to our church in Wuerttemberg. At the time this was not evident. Hofacker himself was puzzled: "What is my place? Where will God have me be?" Some 1,600 citizens of Stuttgart begged the church authorities to name him pastor of the Leonhard Church in Stuttgart. There he preached as vicar and attracted thousands. But then the church officials reassigned Hofacker to what was then a small parish out beyond Marbach. Hofacker wrote: "Because I call men to repentance, my preaching won't go over for more than two years in one place. The people by and by become accustomed to even the sharpest attacks. Then they just want to eat something spicy and ruin their appetite. But my times are in the Lord's hand. He

places His people where He will."

Hofacker did not stay long in Rielingshausen. He was barely thirty when he died in 1828. He was not intended simply for one place. The "place" God put him in as an admonisher and reformer was our church in Wuerttemberg. Here among us (in southwestern Germany), the "cry" He wanted to have heard has never died out.

What Hofacker concerned himself with is still relevant. What was special about Hofacker was not oratorical methods or "chancel prancing" which others might imitate. It is the content of his sermons which still intrigue us. He did not put up long with buffoonery (apparently common in German churches of that day—Tr.). In a clear way unequalled by most since then, he recognized the sources

of sickness in a society which had elevated reason to the position of Supreme Being. "This is the rotten spot of our time," he said, "that no one recognizes his absolute dependence on God or shows any more fear before Him. They have made of our great God nothing but an empty concept. Our rebellious generation no longer regards the rights of divine majesty which God possesses."

Just as clearly he recognizes how contagious a certain hidden piety could be: "There are many who have been awakened in our land who are trying to improve themselves by their own power. They are wrong! We must stand before the God who wants to be all things to us and guard ourselves against self-assumed spirituality. We don't want to be better than He would have us be!"

Against these erroneous developments Hofacker raised his "cry": "I want to cry out so that I am heard from the North Pole to the South Pole that men should fear God and give Him the glory!" And: "Shame on you, you who build so little upon the mercy of Jesus and so much upon yourselves! Away with the rags of your own pious intentions! Get out of this pile of glad rags and come as sinners into the free grace of Jesus!"

It was this basic keynote of the Bible that Hofacker amplified for our church in Wuerttemberg: "Jesus has an eternally valid claim upon us. You belonged to Him when you were still in your mother's womb. You belonged to Him when you wandered far from Him, following your own will. And even if Satan had bound you with a thousand ropes, you are still Jesus' possession, because He has created you and more still: He has redeemed you so that you might be His own."

"With Jesus must one not give up everything that makes life beautiful, interesting, and exciting? That is a prejudice! Jesus' way is not all that narrow! He is broad enough for life. Just come to Him! You will soon experience how broad and how deep life is when one walks in the ways of the Lord."

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Kirchliches Monatsblatt,
Mrs. Irene Schlenker, Editor,
Huntingdon Valley, Pa.

KING . . .

This holy season of Advent also offers a good opportunity for us to prepare for the second coming of our Lord. And such preparation is effected when we look earnestly into our hearts and lives, seeking out the sin and selfishness that is there and by the power of the Holy Spirit replacing it with faith and hope and love. This is indeed the season of the *Love of God*. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."

In the Apostles' Creed we confess that "He shall come to judge the living and the dead." Each time we celebrate Holy Communion we also confess this faith, for St. Paul states:

"As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till He come."

The establishment of the kingdom of God in its final form may still be in the distant future as we count time, or the King may be at the door. If we are ready for His second coming, we can look forward to it with joy. In the closing words of the Bible, Rev. 22:20, we, too, can pray: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" What a day to look forward to, when after suffering and sorrow and tribulation and patient waiting the ancient prophecy is finally fulfilled: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever." Amen.

editorials

CARRYING HIS CROSS

A man came through our town some weeks ago "carrying his cross." His name was Henry Pulsifer and he lives in Long Beach, Mississippi. The cross weighed 80 lbs., and for greater mobility was mounted on a small set of wheels. But he carried the cedar cross on his shoulder and was averaging about 15 miles a day.

Mr. Pulsifer was often stopped by curious travellers and asked, "Where are you headed?" His stock answer was, "Heaven. How about you?" His earthly answer was that he was walking as far as Winnipeg, Manitoba. In his conversations he brought his witness of faith in Christ and how Jesus is the answer to the world's problems.

Mr. Pulsifer's pilgrimage was unique, to say the least, in a society where walkers, bikers and runners on our streets and roadways are advocating one cause or another.

What about this matter of cross-bearing? It is something Jesus talked about. He said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and *take up his cross* and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24). Should we, then, if we follow Christ, do as Henry Pulsifer did, take our position under a cross we can somehow manage and tramp the sidewalks and streets of our towns?

Well, that can hardly be what Jesus had in mind, even though now and then a Henry Pulsifer comes along to make a point dramatically in a way most of us couldn't do.

But there is a cross to be borne by every believer. As the old song says, there's a cross for everyone and there's a cross for me, and for you. We feel it is correct – not everyone will agree – that the cross is whatever one suffers through being identified with Jesus Christ. Thus, only the Christian bears a cross, while anyone may struggle under burdens and trials.

The cross is the ridicule, the snide remark, the antagonism, the mockery, the loneliness one endures because of his commitment to the Lord Jesus. It is whatever one may avoid by denouncing his faith, going along with the crowd, and adopting the rule of doing what every one else is doing.

Yet one evades the cross or gives it up at terrible cost, for to escape the cross is to forfeit life. It is to save one's life, but thereby lose it. It is to be the cautious but tragic man, as the New English Bible so graphically puts it: "Whoever cares for his own safety is lost" (Luke 9:24).

To follow Jesus one must be willing to endure the hostility and unpleasantness that He endured. He told His disciples that if the world hated Him they would hate them also. The Twentieth Century disciple must not expect the Christian way to be "a bed of roses." At least he must be prepared for the reality of the thorns.

There must be the willingness to live by the Ten

Commandments no matter what, to take the unpopular stand, if one is convinced it is God's way, to put His kingdom first, when all around others are giving it lesser place. And then the cross will be there to be picked up.

Don't refuse it, but carry it gladly. By so doing you walk in close fellowship with the great Cross-bearer and you become heir of the fulfillment of wonderful promises for those who walk "in the Master's footsteps." Let one of those promises suffice today: "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life" Revelation 2:10c).

It is really worth-while to follow Jesus. You will find it so. Our prayer for you: Joyous cross-bearing!

RICHES ARE A SNARE

Some time ago newspapers carried the report that the Jim Bakkers (he is president of the organization PTL – Praise the Lord – which sponsors a popular Christian television show) bought a Palm Desert, Calif., home for \$449,000, and two deluxe cars worth over \$100,000 somewhat recently. The purchases are reported to have been made at a time when the Bakkers said they had literally given all they had to the Lord's work.

We're just not acquainted with the PTL telecast and the Bakkers, only knowing the names, but the point we make is that surely it must be wrong for the Lord's people to live in houses that cost that much and to own automobiles that cost four times as much as those the average bloke thinks he can afford to drive.

What must the "world" think of those who speak of having left all to follow Jesus and who then live in lavish accommodations? What must those who make no pretense of being influenced by Biblical values think of those who say they have been and who testify that the things of this world have grown "strangely dim" in the light of knowing the Savior, and who then live extravagantly?

But let us leave the Bakkers (may the Lord help them to seek a life-style more in keeping with those who would give their all to winning the world for Christ). Let us all, if we follow Christ, constantly be examining our relationship to the goods of this world, that we be not overcome by any of them, but wisely relate to them. May each one have what is needed to live comfortably, and be spared from such an abundance that it would cause him to turn from his first and chief love to the love of baubles and beads.

WHAT AN ADVANTAGE

As we sat in the convention of the American Lutheran Church in Moorhead, Minnesota, last month, we did a little calculating about this matter of the ratio of delegates to church membership in the ALC and our own AFLC.

♢

NOSSA ESCOLA BENJAMIN CONSTANT

We are encouraged with our pre-school program connected with a new congregation near Parana, Brazil. Nossa Escola Benjamin Constant is one of three such schools we have in Brazil.

As our month's vacation in July ends, we are looking forward to the next half of the school year.

Our Christian Day School now has an enrollment of over 60 children, one to six years of age.



During the school year the children put on programs in the church every few months. Here the Kindergarten class is singing "This Little Light of Mine."

They also have special activities and parties during the year. Standing in the front of a painting done on the back church wall are our children with their mothers on Mother's Day.



Some of the teachers in their Hillbilly dress.



EDITORIAL . . .

As to confirmed members, the category of members that really counts in this regard, we find that each of the thousand delegates to an ALC biennial convention represents approximately 1,750 other church members. In the AFLC, if we take a convention of 400 delegates, each delegate represents about 30 church members.

Immediately one is struck by the fact that an AFLC annual conference is very close to the congregations. We have a tremendous opportunity to bring conference actions and decisions back to the grassroots. Ideally, each delegate knows personally the 30 people he represents.

In practice it doesn't work out as well as it looks. A small congregation may have a handful of delegates at a conference. It is exceedingly well represented. Another congregation has no representative. There may be no contact with anyone who was at conference, especially if the congregation has a pastoral vacancy at the time.

But anyway, generally speaking, it is a strength of our church body, because we are small, that each delegate to conference, in theory, represents a small group of people. Let's make the most of this advantage.

THE ONLY WAY TO HAVE A FRIEND

The only way to have a friend
Is to be one yourself,
The only way to keep a friend
Is to give from that wealth.

For friendship must be doublefold,
Each one must give his share
Of feelings true if he would reap
The blessings that are there.

If you would say, "He is my friend,"
Then nothing else will do
But you must say, "I am his friend,"
And prove that fact be true.

Author Unknown
(New Hope Center *Beacon*)



Group of children on the playground, dressed up for Hillbilly Days

Besetting sin

It is always easier, of course, to note a besetting sin in the life of someone else than it is to note our own besetting sin. But it is there. With one it may be discontent, an unthankful heart; with another, envy; with another, jealousy; with another, harsh and severe judgment; with another, oversensitiveness, always imagining evil thought or deed against one; with another, cynicism; with another, sloth, laziness; with another, the sins of the tongue; and with another, an evil appetite or the sin of the flesh. But whatever it is, it must be laid aside. The soul and that sin cannot win the race together . . . A single besetting sin, adhering to a man's life, can bring his spiritual progress to a standstill.

—Clarence E. Macartney



Letters to the editor

STRAIGHT PRIORITIES

Lately, we have heard much of the need to broaden the base within the AFLC. When this was first discussed, I thought it made good sense. With expanded resources, we could provide expanded ministries. But, I am beginning to wonder if we haven't gone somewhat overboard with this thing.

We once had great respect for our people and congregations. The AFLC was free and independent congregations. Now the AFLC has become "ministries" and the congregations are merely a means to an end. We began mission work because the congregations wanted to share what they had found. The missions departments were servants of the congregations, through which they shared of their abundance. Now the congregations are servants of the missions departments. We organized schools because the congregations wanted them. The schools served the congregations. Now the congregations serve the schools. This new perspective has yielded deficit budgets, expanding administration costs, and considerable loss of freedom and joy. Our giving is no longer the product of overflowing hearts. We are coerced by the pressure of budget shortfalls and the threat of unpaid salaries.

Ministry to the congregations is as

important as any. That is where our first responsibility lies. Let's loosen the chains of expanded ministries. Let's treat our congregations with the respect they deserve.

Rev. Philip Rokke
Lake Alma, Sask.

(Ed. note: Pastor Rokke asks for responses to what he has written. We welcome that discussion in the *Am-bassador*. Let us hear from you.)

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 she held membership.

MINNESOTA

Thief River Falls

Mrs. Marie Hellquist, 79, Sept. 11, Our Saviour's

Mrs. Elmer (Amy) Gutterud, 47, Oct. 6, Our Saviour's, Thief River Falls

SOUTH DAKOTA

Webster

Mrs. Lena Tvinnereim, 97, Oct. 22, Tabor

Personalities

Rev. Philip Haugen of the Association Schools was the speaker at a weekend conference at Chippewa Lutheran Church, Brandon, Minn., Nov. 3-4.

Rev. Arnold Stone, former teacher at Association Free Lutheran Bible School, now retired, was the speaker at a youth retreat at Faith Haven, Battle Lake, Minn., Nov. 9-11. His topic was the Second Coming of Christ.

Couples' Retreat at Lake Bronson

A couples' retreat will be held at Galilee Bible Camp, Lake Bronson, Minn., Nov. 30-Dec. 1. Lay Pastor Roger Krueger, Fergus Falls, Minn., will speak on "God's Design for the Family."

The retreat begins with a 6:30 supper on Friday and concludes with supper on Saturday night.

There will be a \$10 charge per couple and an opportunity for a free-will offering.

Anyone who cannot make a reservation through a Northwestern Minnesota District congregation is asked to register in advance by calling 218-874-7945.

home mission news

God's blessing in Minot

We, of the congregation of Bethel Lutheran Church in Minot, North Dakota, are thankful for the many blessings of the Lord which have been experienced in our midst.

The beginning was the establishment of our church in 1975 and the sizable loan from the AFLC that made it possible to build, and the construction of the church by Mr. Herb Presteng, Grafton, North Dakota, with some help from church members.

When completed the land and sanctuary cost was about \$225,000. That figure was reduced when an unneeded part of the tract of land was sold. An unexpected gift came after the passing of Mr. Carl Norsteb, who had been waiting to become a member. He had willed his little home to the church. That netted the church about \$13,000. Many other gifts have been given to liquidate the debt on the sanctuary. Mrs. Hannah Johnerson, in the last years of her life, together with what was designated in her will, gave what amounted to some \$20,000. A number of other members have given sacrificially the amounts of one, two, five and ten thousand, not once but a number of times. Payments of \$600.00 were made monthly to the AFLC. Naturally, the principle is reduced so slowly in the early years of a loan as the bulk of the payment is interest.

Thus, in July of this year, the church sanctuary was paid for. And though the parsonage debt is reduced only about half, the congregation has real cause for thanksgiving.

Equally important and vitally needed and appreciated are the weekly tithes and offerings that are necessary to meet the pastor's salary, the upkeep of church and parsonage, the ever-increasing cost of heating, gifts to the Association, and numerous other expenses. As these needs are met, the congregation is appreciative.

We acknowledge that without the previous Home Mission help, which was a substantial subsidy each month, our church could not have come into being and functioned. But the help came! We are grateful to all the churches, which through their giving to Home Missions, made the help available. We remember the advice given by Rev. John Strand when the congregation was organized. It was to get involved in the work of the AFLC and our desire now is to be used in all phases of AFLC outreach.

We do not exist as a little congregation alone. We have the Association, our "big arm" doing the things we at Bethel cannot do alone. We have a great World and Home Mission work—we have an education department, the Bible school where our young people can be established and trained in God's Word, and the seminary for the training of pastors. In this area alone Bethel has been so blessed. In 1975, Seminary Senior

Rodger Olson and family came for the summer to begin our work. Other students who served in the absence of a pastor were Timothy Skramstad, Rodney Johnson, James Gerdeen, Tony Stockman and Marty Horn, as well as Philip Haugen, an instructor at the seminary. In pastors who accepted the call to serve, we have been blessed indeed. They are Rev. Bruce Dalager, Rev. Terry Olson, and, at present, Rev. Peter Franz. We are indeed grateful to the Lord who has made all this possible and used the AFLC to accomplish His purpose.

But we need to be practical. The Lord only uses the finances that we, you, and I give. And the expenses at headquarters, the salaries of missionaries and teachers, administrative offices, building upkeep, etc., though held to a minimal need, are still great. Could we as individuals give an extra \$25, \$100 or \$1,000 to this great need? One thing is sure, the Lord finds ways to repay many times over.

It is our prayer now that we be a church very supportive of the work of our Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. May this work not be hindered by the lack of finances. What we have is from the Lord.

Mrs. Oscar Folden
Minot, N. Dak.

HOMEcoming XVIII

The AFLBS campus bustled with activity as nearly 120 alumni returned for Homecoming on October 12-14.

"It was a good weekend," said an alumnus. "I was spiritually encouraged." The theme was "Be Thou Our Vision" from Heb. 12:2.

Mr. Tonnes Paulestad, '72, of Cokato, Minn. heads the Alumni Association as it continues to develop as a strong support organization for AFLBS.

Photos by Julie Melby
Yvonne Haugen, Class of '84



COMFORT, COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE

Comfort, comfort ye My people,
Speak ye peace, thus saith our God;
Comfort those who sit in darkness,
Mourning 'neath their sorrow's load;
Speak ye to Jerusalem
Of the peace that waits for them;
Tell her that her sins I cover,
And her warfare now is over.

For the herald's voice is crying
In the desert far and near,
Bidding all men to repentance,
Since the kingdom now is here.
O that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way!
Let the valleys rise to meet Him,
And the hills bow down to greet Him.

Make ye straight what long was crooked,
Make the rougher places plain;
Let your hearts be true and humble,
As befits His holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord
Now o'er earth is shed abroad,
And all flesh shall see the token
That His Word is never broken.

Johannes Olearius
(from *The Augustana Hymnal*)

at AFLBS



Pastors Francis Monseth, Amos Dyrud, and Donald Greven helped serve at the Friday night ice cream social. Over 200 students and alumni enjoyed the kick-off to Homecoming weekend.

November 20, 1984

Our hymn study

O HOW SHALL I RECEIVE THEE

Tune: St. Theodulph
Concordia, No. 112
Paul Gerhardt, 1653
Tr. Arthur T. Russell, 1851, alt.

Because of the warm, confiding faith in God reflected in Gerhardt's hymns, they have become a source of special comfort in heavy-laden souls. Not only do they breathe a spirit of tender consolation, but also a "joy unspeakable and full of glory." A beautiful example is the fifth stanza of his Advent hymn, "O How Shall I Receive Thee":

Rejoice then, ye sad-hearted,
Who sit in deepest gloom,
Who mourn o'er joys departed,
And tremble at your doom;
He who alone can cheer you
Is standing at the door;
He brings His pity near you,
And bids you weep no more.

In Gerhardt's hymns we find a transition in hymnody from objective expression to the more subjective. For example, 16 of his hymns begin with the pronoun "I," a characteristic uncommon to good hymnody. Still, Gerhardt doesn't indulge in weak sentimentality and selfishness so often associated with the egoistic hedonist religious practices popular today. Nor does he allow us to become pseudo pietistic and forget the great objective truth that we are saved by grace—justification by faith alone.

So while his hymns are emotional songs of the heart, constantly emphasizing the tenderness of God's love, they still declare Scriptural truths and they exhort us to a more Christian existence. So Gerhardt adds *reach* to preach and teach.

In the Lutheran church at Lubben, Germany, there hangs a life-size painting of Gerhardt, which bears

continued on p. 15

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THE WOMEN'S PAGE

Fall Rally reviews

Eastern N. Dak.

The New Luther Valley Lutheran Church in McVie, N. Dak., hosted the Fall Rally for the Eastern North Dakota WMF Tuesday, Oct. 2, 1984. The theme for the day was "God's Stewards . . . Not Owners," based on Luke 19:13. Mrs. Karen Knudsvig presided over the sessions. Music was provided by the district's pastor's wives. Mrs. Dorothy Jodock had the morning scripture and prayer. Pastor Eldon Nelson spoke on stewardship of Jesus name.

Mrs. Joella Knudson had the afternoon scripture and prayer and Mrs. Becky Berge shared in song. Stewardship Highlights depicting the WMF Projects in various ways, was presented by different churches in the Eastern district. Election of officers was held and re-elected for Dist. president was Mrs. Karen Knudsvig and for treasurer, re-elected was Mrs. Carol Haugen. Mrs. Mavis Lofthus led the hymn sings for the day. There were 139 ladies registered plus 8 pastors and 5 visitors.

Mrs. Henry Mohagen

Lake Superior

The fall rally of the Lake Superior WMF met at the Drummond Free Lutheran Church in Drummond, Wisconsin on Saturday, September 29, 1984.

Mrs. Rosamund Lee welcomed us. Mrs. Josie Miller opened with our theme song "O Zion, Haste" and scripture and prayer were given by Bonnie Roberts.

The Bible study "A Woman's Influence" based on Proverbs was given by Grace Christenson of Drummond.

Pastor Van Someren gave the afternoon message and based it on the theme "Give Thy Sons—Give Thy Wealth."

We were blessed with many musical numbers, readings and good food.

Minneapolis

"Christ For The World" was the theme chosen by the Minneapolis District Women's Missionary Federation for their Fall Rally held on October 20, 1984. Rosedale Lutheran, Minneapolis, assisted by Faith Lutheran, Minneapolis, were the hosts for the day. There were 124 registered at the rally. Organist and pianist were Mrs. Verna Lindgren and Carol Hansen. Miriam Stolee, Hauge Lutheran, Kenyon, Minn. was the hymn sing leader.

President Lucy Boyum opened the session. A warm welcome was given by Mrs. Mar-

garet Kindem of Rosedale Lutheran. Special music for the morning session was by Miriam Stolee. The Bible Study was led by Mrs. John Abel, missionary to Brazil, sharing with us from the Book of Acts. She encouraged us to be fervent in our prayer life. The missionaries need prayer so very much. The blessings come when we pray and without it, we are powerless.

During the business meeting, Missionary For A Day Secretary, Mrs. Margaret Mundfrom shared news from the Charles Knapps who will be coming home on furlough in February. Betty Christopherson reported that 36 new souls had been added to the Cradle Roll. A report from the ARC was given by Mrs. Bob Dietsche. The spring rally will be held on April 9, at Salem Lutheran, Radcliffe, Iowa.

Afternoon devotions were given by Mrs. Ted Hanson, King of Glory Lutheran. Mrs. John Abel sang a solo. The afternoon message was brought by Mrs. Karuna Dasari. She told of the work being done in India and that a building has been found for an orphanage. It is expected that there will be from 80-100 children ranging in age from 5-10 years of age making their home here. We were encouraged to pray for that work. Pastor Ralph Rokke closed the day's session.

Mrs. Ronald Horn

West Coast

The West Coast District WMF Rally was held on Sept. 25, 1984, at Kirkland, Washington. The theme was "I Know Whom I Have Believed," II Tim. 1:12.

Mrs. Jan Willand, of Ferndale, shared for morning devotions. LuVonne Nelson sang "Fill My Cup Lord."

The Bible Study was given by Trinna Tollefson, of Astoria. She based her study on the Parable of the Sower to illustrate four ways in which a person might live.

The women voted to combine the Spring Rally with the Mid-Winter Bible Conference to be held March 7-9, 1985, at Lake Stevens, Washington.

An afternoon singspiration was led by Mrs. Ken Moland.

Special music was sung by Mrs. Moland before the afternoon speaker gave the message. Pastor Del Palmer of Everett, spoke on "How Well Do You Know God?"

A group of ladies from Kalispell, sang at the close of the service.

Pastor Moland closed the day with prayer. There were 66 women registered.

Mrs. Kathy Olson

WOMEN'S MISSIONARY FEDERATION

In Memoriam gifts received

Esther Eilertson, Shevlin, Minn.; Signa Solberg, Shevlin, Minn.; Cora Hanson, Bagley, Minn.; Anna Bergquist, Shevlin, Minn.; Anna Felt, Shevlin, Minn.; Agnes Matson, Shevlin, Minn.; Adel and Camilla Flotterud, Zumbrota, Minn.; Orville Nelson, Pukwana, S. Dak.; Milton Gustafson, Valley City, N. Dak.; Ed Morris, Valley City, N. Dak.; Palmer Wangrud, Valley City, N. Dak.; Wesley Anderson, Tioga, N. Dak.

an idea for your family at Christmas

By Mrs. R. P. Haakonson,
Moorehead, Minn.

Several years ago I read a Christmas tract that spoke to me so vividly and I'd like to share it in part with you. A little girl was distributing the Christmas gifts from under the tree. After all gifts had been handed out, the little girl kept looking for more. Finally, her father asked, "What are you hunting for?" She replied, "I thought Christmas was Jesus' birthday, but I haven't found one gift for Him. I guess everyone forgot Him. Did they, Daddy?"

Friend, have you forgotten Jesus' birthday? Are we so engrossed with ourselves and our loved ones that we forget Jesus? Why not put Jesus on your priority list this year? It can be done in many ways. In our immediate family, whenever we can get together for Christmas (which isn't often with two daughters and families on the mission field), we like to have everyone, children and adults, participate in a love offering for Jesus on Christmas Eve before we open our presents. This offering is given to some needy cause that we have chosen beforehand and prayed about. It is such a thrill to see the joy on the faces of the grandchildren as they present their own gift to Jesus. Plan

NEWS OF THE CHURCHES

Goodridge, Minn.—Speakers at Family Nights this fall at Telemarken Lutheran Church have been Rev. Leslie Galland, Thief River Falls, Minn., and Rev. Gerald Mundfrom, Osceola, Wis. Telemarken Lutheran is an independent congregation supporting the benevolences of the AFLC. It is served by Rev. Raynard Huglen, Newfolden, Minn.

Minnewaukan, N. Dak.—The film *Joni* was shown at Trinity Lutheran on Oct. 19. It was shown at Christ Lutheran, Devils Lake, on the 20th and at Lebanon in Leeds the day after that.

Ferndale, Wash.—A Halloween party was held at Triumph Lutheran on Oct. 31. It was for everyone. The evening began with a spaghetti feed at 5:30. Many folks came dressed as Biblical characters.

Tioga, N. Dak.—A Luther League hayride was held on Oct. 7, starting out from the Art Olson farm.

this ahead of time and you'll be delighted with the results.

The following poem expresses the same thought.

HE OUGHT TO KNOW

Did you ever have a birthday,
And the people that you know
Just gave each other presents
And never thought of you?

That's what we do to Jesus,
The dearest Friend we know,
Now if we really love Him,
Don't you think it ought to show?

So as we spend this Christmas,
Let's turn our thoughts away
From other things and think of Him
On this, His special day.

We cannot kneel beside His crib,
As Wisemen long ago,
But if we really love Him,
Don't you think He ought to know?

(Ed. note: Mrs. Haakonson is one of our writers in our Christmas *Am-bassador*, coming next time.)

HYMN . . .

this inscription: *A theologian sifted in Satan's sieve*. That epitomizes the sad life story of the Prince of Lutheran Hymnwriters.

The Thirty Years War was raging and all Germany was suffering. Gerhardt, unable to secure a parish after theological study, served several years as a tutor. This innocuous position brought him in contact with the great Lutheran cantor and musician, Johann Cruger, however, and he became a contributing poet to Cruger's *Praxis Pietatis Melica* (Practical Pious Songs). The seed was nourished.

Three years after the war he took his first parish. Six years later he became third assistant at a large church in Berlin. His hymn stock grew. His popularity and that of his hymns grew. His preaching drew large audiences.

The controversy between the Lutherans and the Calvinists flared up again as a result of the effort of Elector Friedrich Wilhelm, a Calvinist, to unite the factions. He sought to compel the clergy to sign an oath that they would no longer preach on doctrinal differences. Gerhardt, always moderate in his speech, nevertheless felt it a political act which was compromising the faith. He refused and was soon removed from his call.

To add to his sorrows, Gerhardt's wife and son died during this upheaval. Three other children had died earlier, and now he was left with a six-year-old son. After struggling along for two years he was called to a small rural church at Lubben where he ministered faithfully to a congregation described by Julian as a "rough and unsympathizing people." There he died after eight years in 1676.

In the midst and totality of this difficult life he managed to write 130 of the finest and most beloved hymns of perfect peace and joy which neither trials nor persecution could squelch.

Catherine Winkworth, the brilliant English translator of German hymns, has given this estimate of Gerhardt's contribution to Christian hymnody:

"As a poet he undoubtedly holds

the highest place among the hymn writers of Germany. His hymns seem to be the spontaneous outpouring of a heart that overflows with love, trust and praise. His tenderness and fervor never degenerate into sentimentality, nor his penitence and sorrow into morbid despondency.

Stanzas 1-4:

O how shall I receive Thee,
How greet thee, Lord, aright?
All nations long to see Thee,
My hope, my heart's delight!
O kindle, Lord, most holy,
Thy lamp within my breast,
To do in spirit lowly
All that may please Thee best.

Thy Zion palms is strewing,
And branches fresh and fair;
My heart, its pow'rs renewing,
An anthem shall prepare.
My soul puts off her sadness
Thy glories to proclaim;
With all her strength and gladness
She fain would serve Thy name.

I lay in fetters groaning,
Thou came to set me free!
I stood, my shame bemoaning,
Thou came to honor me!
A glory Thou dost give me,
A treasure safe on high,
That will not fail nor leave me
As earthly riches fly.

Love caused Thy Incarnation,
Love brought Thee down to me,
Thy thirst for my salvation
Procured my liberty.
O love beyond all telling,
That led Thee to embrace,
In love all love excelling,
Our lost and fallen race!

Other hymns by Gerhardt:

- 130 All My Heart This Night
Rejoices
- 165 A Lamb Goes Forth Our
Griefs to Share
- 167 O Sacred Head Now Wounded
- 179 O World, See Here Suspended
- 212 Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to
Me
- 261 Blest Is He That Never
Walketh
- 275 If God Himself Be for Me
- 285 Commit Thou All That
Grieves Thee
- 291 Evening and Morning

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