

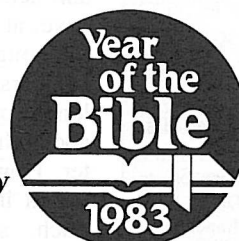
THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

November 8, 1983

TRUST IN THE LORD
WITH ALL YOUR HEART
AND LEAN NOT ON YOUR
OWN UNDERSTANDING;
IN ALL YOUR WAYS
ACKNOWLEDGE
HIM,
AND HE WILL MAKE YOUR
PATHS STRAIGHT.

Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

A Message of Love Sponsored by



AT THE MASTER'S FEET



Pastor Philip Rokke

The choice is ours

"But prove yourselves doers of the Word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if any one is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does. If any one thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world" (James 1:22-27).

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Volume 21 Number 21

Though we are all well aware of how we look, too few of us are satisfied with it. We want to look good and be attractive. We want others to desire our company and feel favorably disposed toward us. We think that if we could change certain features of our appearance that would be so.

Where there is a demand there will soon be a supply. It has become big business to make people look good. Consultants tell us how to pile our hair, what colors enhance our complexion, and how to use make-up to create the illusion of a shadow, for example, on some spot that the sun hits quite directly. Some of the consultants even take pictures "before" and "after" to illustrate the effectiveness of their services.

Looking into God's Word is like looking into a mirror. We discover a great deal about ourselves. The character of man, your character and mine, is clearly explained and illustrated. Jeremiah said that the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. We see how Ananias and Sapphira lied about their gift to the church and we realize that is not radically different from things we may have done or considered doing. We read that the nature of the flesh is primarily to seek its own profit. Then we read about Zacchaeus, who cheated his constituency, or Judas, who pilfered from the common purse. If we look back at our lives and actions, do we not find that they have, at times, been quite similar?

Though we are not apt to forget if our ears stick out or our nose is too long, some of us are quite indifferent about the deficiencies of our character. How can anyone see the ugliness of sin in his life and not be moved? Such short-sightedness will bring them to destruction.

The law gives us this picture of

ourselves as we are before we meet Christ. But, there is more to Scripture, there is a remedy. The law of liberty casts us in a different light. Christ removes our sinfulness and replaces it with his own beautiful nature. We are the beloved children of the Father. We can be satisfied and at peace with ourselves at last.

The real point that James is making, though, is this: now that you have seen yourself both ways, which way do you want to live? God has presented quite clearly the alternatives. There is the beauty of God and His will and ways or the offensiveness of our own selfishness and deceit. God isn't particularly asking us if we want to go to heaven or hell. He is offering us righteousness and truth in place of sin. If we receive His righteousness, He will take us to Himself in heaven. If we cling to evil, then hell is where we belong. Some people say to God, "You keep Your righteousness, but I will surely accept a place in heaven." They are deceiving themselves. We desire heaven because it is place of peace, joy and goodness, but we live our lives in a way that yields strife, sorrow and destruction. If forgiveness is a pleasant thing, let us forgive. If we appreciate God's ways, let us walk in them.

"You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? Even so every good tree bears good fruit; but the rotten tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down, and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits. Not every one who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:16-21).

Reasons for praise

A Psalm for Thanksgiving

Psalm 100

Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful singing. Know that the Lord Himself is God; it is He who made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise. For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting, and His faithfulness to all generations" (NASB).

by Lay Pastor James Olson

Hatton, N. Dak.

Thursday, November 24, is a day which is set apart in 1983 as a day of national thanksgiving. On Thanksgiving Day our nation acknowledges that God is the Giver of all good and perfect gifts.

Although I realize that for many it is only a matter of form and custom, I'm glad to know that America is willing to acknowledge God as the source from whom all blessings flow.

If we are to be truly thankful, we must have something to be thankful for. There must be something to tune our hearts for praise and thanksgiving. As I have been considering what I have to be thankful for, my attention has been drawn to Psalm 100. This Psalm of Thanksgiving was sung at the time when the sacrifice of thanksgiving was offered. Furthermore, it is the core of a large group of praise songs which begins in Psalm 95 and continues through Psalm 108.

When we speak of thanksgiving, our conception of it seems to run along temporal lines, as we first think of our material goods. But when we look at this group of songs (Psalms 95-108) we find that the Psalmist looks far beyond the temporal blessings. If we desire a Thanksgiving Day in the spirit and truth of the Psalms we must be thankful for more than the material goods with which God has so richly blessed us!

An integral part of our Thanksgiving Day should be worship. As we

gather to worship God, especially during this Thanksgiving season, let's take time to reflect on the character of God. In The New Bible Commentary: Revised on Psalm 100, this thought is given: "The summons to worshipful *thanksgiving* arises from contemplation of the character of the Lord as good, and especially in that his *steadfast love* for us, and His reliable *faithfulness* towards us, are not dependent on anything in us, nor are they divine whims for a moment, but (as the emphasis in the Hebrew makes doubly clear) they are the abiding attitudes and activities of this good God at all times *for ever* and *to all* succeeding *generations*."

GOD IS A GREAT GOD

Before we can be truly thankful we need a vision of how great is our God! The Psalmist clearly realized that God is a great God. Psalm 95:3: "For the Lord is a great God. And a great King above all gods." Psalm 96:4: "For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods." Psalm 99:3 "Let them praise Thy great and awesome name; Holy is He."

There can be no doubt that the Psalmist has caught a vision of the greatness of God. It is necessary for us to realize the greatness of God, for this is the foundation of all God's work and promises.

HE IS OUR GOD—AND FATHER

He is our God, and we are His people! We are His because of *creation* and *election*. Ephesians 1:11:

"[In Him] also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will." Ephesians 1:18: "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of glory of His inheritance in the saints." Because He is our Creator, as well as our Shepherd, we can be assured that He is watching over us. Isaiah 46:4: "Even to your old age I shall be the same, and even to your graying years I shall bear you! I have done it, and I shall carry you; and I shall bear you, and I shall deliver you."

HIS GOODNESS

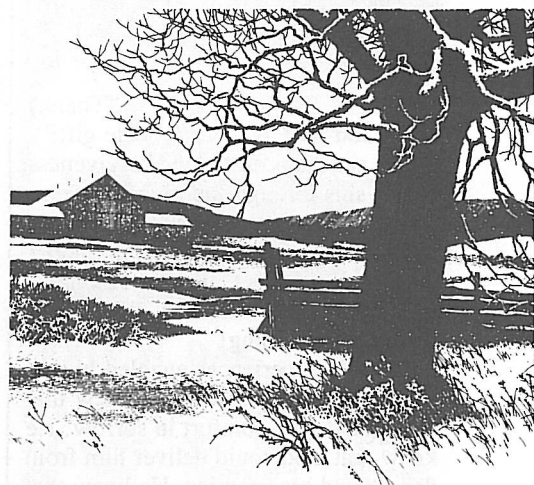
One of the main arguments of Psalm 100, that we thank God, is that He is good.

This points especially to temporal blessings. Have you taken time lately to think about the bountiful gifts you receive from God each day? He has been good to us!

"Count your blessings, name them one by one . . ." If we would stop and count our blessings, we would realize what cause there is for thanksgiving.

HIS MERCIES

Our thoughts are now directed to our spiritual blessings. Are we truly thankful for His mercy? Are we guilty of taking for granted the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ? We could well take our cue from the Apostle Paul, who



said, in II Corinthians 9:15, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"

Are we thankful for the forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Jesus Christ? In many "Christian" circles today it's not fashionable to talk about the blood of Jesus Christ, but the truth is that without Christ's death, we would have nothing!

David's experiences enabled him to speak from experience. He knew that God could give comfort in sorrow. He knew that God could deliver him from danger and his enemies. He knew that God heard and answered his prayers.

Likewise, we as Christians know these things to be true. Does that knowledge make us thankful to God for His mercy which is everlasting? Isaiah 40:8: "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever."

HIS FAITHFULNESS

The Psalmist was ready to bear testimony to the faithfulness of God.

Although there was a point in David's life when he had lived with unconfessed sin for an extended period of time, he had been forgiven when he confessed that sin. David had experienced the faithfulness of God.

If we wish to have a spirit of thanksgiving, we need to look at our own lives to see if there is some sin for which we have not been willing to seek God's forgiveness. God is faithful to His people, though we are often unfaithful to Him. We should be thankful for the promise of I John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Nobody will ever have reason to say that God was untrue or unfaithful. I know of no one who was ever disappointed that they took refuge in Him!

When the Psalmist looked at these things he burst into the exhortation: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord. Serve Him with gladness: come before His presence with singing."

As forgiven sinners, we have much to sing about and to be thankful for!

The Word of God:

by Raynard Huglen, Editor

Introduction

Have you picked up a copy of the Bible lately and asked yourself, "What manner of book is this?"

Perhaps within every one of our church homes there is within easy reach a great treasure. Unfortunately, in all too many cases familiarity with the Bible breeds, if not contempt, at least lethargy, and the Bible is left lying on its shelf or stand.

One reason we have a World-Wide or Universal Bible Sunday is to concentrate on this "Book of books." Each congregation is in existence because of the Bible and the message contained therein. In our Explanation of the *Catechism* we are told that the best way we come to know there is a God is through the Bible. There "He still more clearly reveals Himself."

The great task of a congregation and church body is to spread this Word, to preach it, to teach it, to get it into the hands of other people. Only when this work is being carried on does a congregation have the right to exist.

How Did The Bible Come to Us?

It began in the heart of God. It is His Word. That's why it has power and lives today. The Word came from the Lord.

Nevertheless, it was written down by human instruments. God doesn't do for man what he can himself do and only on rare occasions contravenes that principle. So men who were in communion with God wrote the books which make up our Bible. The approximately 40 writers did not act as mechanical robots; they wrote

"... The message was "God-breathed," or 'Spirit-breathed,' if you prefer. We call this *inspiration*."

in their own styles and with varying education and social status, but the message was "God-breathed," or "Spirit-breathed," if you prefer. We call this *inspiration*. Hence we reject the words of one recent Lutheran leader when he called the Bible this "weak and human instrument."

The Bible was collected over a period of years. It didn't appear all of a sudden as one volume. No, it had to be gathered and collected out of many writings in and from Bible times. Here again, devout men led by God assembled the Bible, judging to see if our Old Testament books were in the spirit of Moses and those of the New Testament were in the spirit of Jesus. The result was our 66-book Bible. And we know the work of the compilers was of the Lord. Why? Because the Book has lived, it speaks today and its message changes lives among the rich and poor, the educated and poorly educated, the black and white, the socially elite and the socially disadvantaged.

It Has Shone Through the Centuries

The Bible is the "Everlasting Light." Isn't Jesus the Light of the world? Yes, but this Book tells about Him, so it, too, is light. It is a guide to life, to living, and is a lamp to the pathway (Psalm 109:105).

Today a part of the Bible is to be found in over 1200 tongues (in its entirety in every significant language) and much of this translation miracle has happened since World War II. Increased ease of travel, new skills in linguistics and the possibilities of mass production have helped to bring it to pass.

The Bible has outlasted civilizations, notably the Roman Empire, during which Christianity began. We see the hand of God in this preservation. Before the Empire fell Jerome brought the Word of God into Latin. Through the Dark Ages it was kept safely in monasteries and churches. It has even been contended that because Ulfilas, the "apostle to the Goths," translated the Scriptures for the West

the Everlasting Light

Goths, they and other barbaric hordes of Europe and Asia were not as destructive and savage as they might otherwise have been.

In those years the Angles and Saxons invaded Britain. Christianity was exterminated. Not so in Ireland, however, where a light of spiritual truth was kept alive. At last Irish missionaries brought the Gospel back to England and others came from Rome for the same purpose. Then the Christian faith could move on to the Continent. St. Boniface (Winifred) was one who carried the Gospel eastward.

The 15th century was a dark period. Sometimes the night is darkest

just before the dawn. The official church, the Roman one, was corrupt. The Renaissance brought a love of art and literature but no renaissance of the cause of Christ. The Mohammedan Turks moved into western Europe itself, threatening to overrun the land and plant a new and alien religion.

And then was born the man who rediscovered the "Everlasting Light," Martin Luther, born 500 years ago this month (Nov. 10). It was a passage from this Book of books which brought his soul liberty: "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). He translated the Bible into the German language and the invention of the

press with movable type by Gutenberg made its wide distribution possible.

The 18th and 19th centuries brought rationalism and advanced science. These posed new threats, among them the theory of evolution. But the Bible emerged victorious. The great missionary push occurred in the 1800s and continued into the 20th century. The Bible societies and the Gideon Society (now Gideons International) have done tremendous work in making the Scriptures available.

What is the Bible's Genius?

What sets it apart? It is God's Word. As we said earlier, it is inspired. It speaks to people's needs. It points out a way out from life gone sour. The Bible does this by presenting Jesus Christ, God's gift of love to mankind (John 3:16).

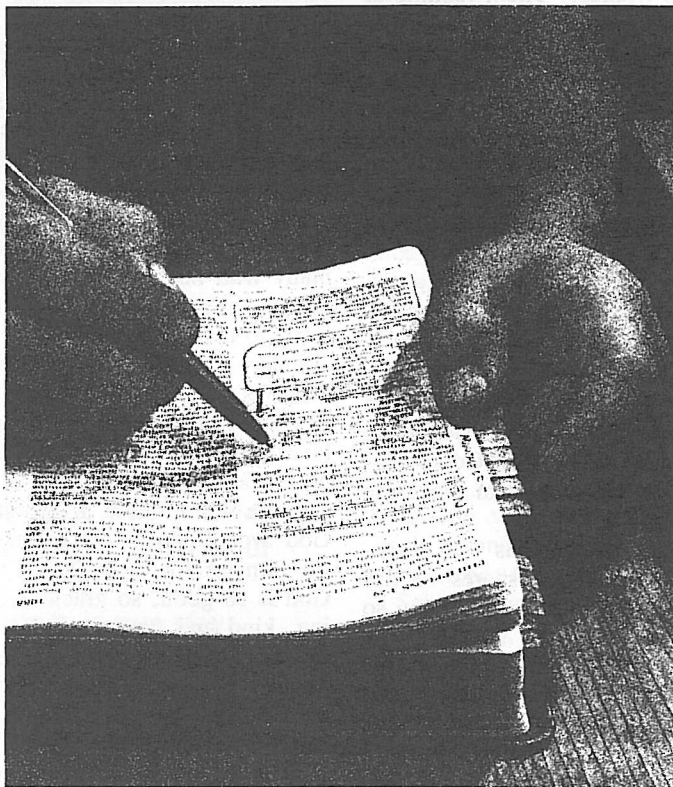
Out of many, here is an example of a life transformed. One night a derelict wandered into a rescue mission in

"It (the Bible) speaks to people's needs. It points out a way out from life gone sour."

some American city. He was drunk, he was homeless, he was helpless. Reared in a good home in Scotland, he had a religious upbringing. The man had ability and energy but the social glass had proved his undoing. Again and again he vowed a new start; again and again his will power failed and gradually his friends lost all confidence in him.

Dirty, ragged, penniless and friendless he dropped into a mission seat. His eye caught a motto on the wall: "Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." With those words came a flood of memories for that Scotsman for that motto had hung in his childhood home. He thought of Mother, now gone, of his brothers and sisters. He considered those days and his present miserable state.

(Continued on p. 14)



YOUR WORD IS A LAMP
TO MY FEET AND A LIGHT
TO MY PATH. Psalms 119:105
NKJV

“I was in prison . . .”

It was eight years ago that the opportunity came to me to visit the prisoners at the Marquette (Mich.) Branch Prison. As the day for my first visit approached, there were numerous questions, as: What do I say? What do I talk about? These are people that are locked up, separated from society and loved ones. These are people with different backgrounds, perhaps, people of different skin color, etc. And many more questions came to me.

While praying much and bringing these thoughts to the Lord, I was assured of the answer—talk about Jesus.

Each Thursday evening for two hours, a few outsiders and 20-25 inmates would meet in the Chapel inside the walls for sharing and Bible study. These meetings were called the Ichthus (fishers) group, normally led by the inmates. Bible studies would be conducted by inmates or visitors, usually arranged a week in advance.

Many precious moments are recorded in my memory of God's love shining into my own day and then to those who have been so much forgotten by our society and left to suffer the consequences of a life wrecked by sin. So often we forget that we, too, are, or were, under the condemnation of God's law because of sin. But then for those who trusted Him as Savior and Lord, Jesus and His atoning work on Calvary became real for me. I believed and accepted it for my freedom. This can be possible for prisoners, too. God loves them just as much as He loves me. This, then, is the central part of the sharing and Bible study with whosoever would believe, be they prisoner or outsider.

Most of these men are in their 20s, many serving life sentences, a few with natural life, which would mean no parole, and a few with two-three-four life sentences. Being a maximum security prison means that those with longer sentences would be sent there. Of course, there is the security that the state would place over

those with such sentences, termed as “tough.”

These men are of all skin colors and differing backgrounds, but all without exception in need, mostly to be free of the strange, cold and lonesome environment that accompanies prison life. But much more than that they need to be free of the guilty, condemning situation they are in inwardly and Jesus is the only one who can make them free.

I had the opportunity to sit and talk with a young man in his middle 20s who then asked me, “Why do you come each week to spend an evening with us here? I really appreciate it but then you have your family and friends.” Then, looking at his hand on mine, he continued, “It's so obvious that you are white and I am black. Why do you care?” Without waiting for an answer, he said, “Oh! I know, you need not tell me. It's the love of God that causes you to do it.” We then talked more about Jesus and tears of joy accompanied our brief discussion.

So it is, only God's love through us to others will make the difference, whether in prison or outside.

When listening to many talk about their past life, it can at times make one shudder. But then it is wonderful to know and share that God's forgiveness and cleansing can make the foulest clean.

One thing that stands out, especially when a visitor shares or has Bible study, is that the men listen so quietly and with such intensity that one would hope this would be true even in our churches. We, too, need to know we are sinners, saved by His grace, and that we, too, have a need—to hear. These men know they are sinners because they are there—still listening, hoping to hear of a way out, so you tell them about Jesus, the Way.

Many have read the Bible through many times. And yet as one said, “I have read the Bible through many times and then I prayed, ‘Lord, show me what You are trying to tell

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10).

Some have said that tithing belongs to Old Testament times. According to Jesus' remarks in Matthew 23:23, tithing should not be left undone. The motive for giving should

me in Your Word.’” The Lord proceeded to show him a portion at a time and changed his life. He became such a vibrant, enthusiastic witness for his Lord and he so wanted to know more about Jesus. Praise the Lord—He is able!

If there are any particular seasons that have a special meaning to prisoners, it is the Christmas season. So many have indicated that it is such a lonely feeling to think of Christmases past, the family gathering, friends, gifts and all that's associated with the holidays. They are a torture to bear, many with not a word, card or letter to try to help bring some kind of cheer to that lonesomeness.

Such experiences abound and make me realize better what a great God we have, and understand His love a bit more and know and see how God can change lives.

Little did I know at the start that God would allow me to meet with the inmates for eight years, but then God is so good, so gracious and loving, kind and forgiving. To Him be all the glory, praise and thanks for not only giving me the opportunity, but also the strength and love needed for His service there.

Yes, I have seen Jesus in prison, in the person of these neglected men, many forsaken by family and friends, alone, waiting for someone to care. And Jesus does. He is calling you and me to bring His message of love to whosoever.

George Johnson
Calvary Lutheran Church
Eben Jct., Mich.

THE BLESSINGS OF GIVING

be because of the love and compassion which Christ has placed in our hearts for the salvation of those in our midst and in the nations where the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ has not been preached and taught. These people live in fear of the unknown and die without

Christ. A song in the *Concordia* hymnal says:

"Lost in the night doth the heathen
yet languish,
Longing for morning the darkness
to vanquish,
Plaintively heaving a sigh full of
anguish:
Will not day come soon? Will not
day come soon?"

Missions should be a gnawing concern for us as Christians. May God give us such concern also for our Schools and Home Missions.

As our giving increases, God's

windows open to lavish us with His gifts. Isn't it a wonder that God wants us to be co-workers with Him? I Corinthians 3:9: "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."

Some of our congregations are practicing percentage giving to the Association's benevolences, beginning with ten and going to 20 percent and more as the members' vision and giving increases. This is great.

The income of our Association has been very small this past summer. May our people and congregations give as much as they can and as soon as possible in order to lessen the burden of those at our headquarters.

II Corinthians 9:6, 7b: "But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully . . . for God loveth a cheerful giver."

Giving to God's work will not make you poor; it's a good investment.

Harvey Dyrud
Newfolden, Minn.
Member, Stewardship Board

Praise to God, immortal praise

Praise to God, immortal praise,
For the love that crowns our days,
Bounteous Source of ev'ry joy,
Let Thy praise our tongues employ;
All to Thee, our God, we owe,
Source whence all our blessings
flow.

All the blessings of the fields,
All the stores the garden yields,
Flocks that whiten all the plain,
Yellow sheaves of ripen'd grain—
Lord, to Thee our souls shall raise
Grateful vows and solemn praise.

Clouds that drop their fatt'ning
dews,
Suns that genial warmth diffuse,
All the plenty summer pours,
Autumn's rich o'erflowing stores;
All to Thee, our God, we owe,
Source whence all our blessings
flow.

Peace, prosperity, and health,
Private bliss and public wealth,
Knowledge, with its gladd'ning
streams,
Pure religion's holier beams—
Lord, for these our souls shall raise
Grateful vows and solemn praise.

(Author unknown)



RNS Photo

world mission news

an evangelistic crusade in Leon, Mexico

The Spirit of the Lord moved among us

by Pastor Samuel R. Flores
Leon, Gto., Mexico

It is a great responsibility to pour out in letters that which has been a marvelous work of God in our church. It can be seen by the results obtained. This has been a glorious opportunity for us, in the course of this crusade, to hear the divine message, a precious gift from our God. The Rev. Kenneth Pentti has been in Leon, Gto., and by means of his preaching the Lord Jesus Christ has transformed the lives of several believers, including both those who have known the Holy Gospel for the last three or five years, and those who have heard the message of salvation for the first time during this crusade. The preaching each day was translated into Spanish by Miss Leticia Flores. The need for translation might be considered to be an obstacle, but no one seems to have thought so. St. Andrew the Apostle Lutheran Congregation, previously known as Prince of Peace Mission, is a new work. It has been in its temporary facilities less than two years on the property where the church will be built. It is with great joy that we have received Rev. Pentti, our visit

ing pastor, for our first evangelistic crusade. At least 20 persons came up to the altar to give their lives to the Lord in answer to the call given out in the sermons by Rev. Pentti.

The congregation each day was not large, because the city of Leon and all of the central area of the country, which has been the victim of a tremendous drought since last spring, was now receiving heaven's gift, manifested in torrential clouds of rain each afternoon. This impeded the attendance of those families that did not have cars. A few stated their opinion that the Lord chose a select group of faithful persons and visitors in order to manifest His grace in them, as those people who attended each night did not seem to be disturbed by any obstacle. As soon as the crusade was finished, the sun began to shine as brightly as before.

After four days of activity the presence of the Lord could be very plainly seen in the hearts of many people. At the time, a moment of testing was deeply felt by the congregation when the health of Rev. Pentti was broken. Some of the brethren were of the opinion that it was a work of the evil one, who tried first to impede the willingness of many people to attend the crusade by means of the rain, but when this failed, he then attacked the health of the preacher, to diminish the effec-

tiveness of his preaching. We were very sad to see Rev. Pentti sick. He said that he felt considerably improved when we saw him off at the International Airport in the City of Mexico, at the time of his return to the United States, although he appeared to us a little weak. Brother Pentti, at the moment we write this letter, the brethren of the congregations in Leon and Celaya have not ceased praying for your complete return to health. In spite of this sadness, the message of Rev. Pentti was vigorous and full of the Holy Spirit.

A few of the visible results of the campaign which we have been able to measure can be stated in the following way:

1. An average of 30 persons made up the congregation which listened to the message each night from Rev. Pentti.
2. Two young ladies, three women, and five young men received the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

"After four days of activity the presence of the Lord could be very plainly seen in the hearts of many people."

3. One young woman, who previously had accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as her Savior, but whose faith was somewhat passive, has asked for confirmation as a member of the church after the preaching of Rev. Pentti.
4. Besides these, three young ladies, five women, and two young men found their faith increased during the campaign and gave public testimony of their decision to surrender their lives once and for all to the Lord.
5. On Tuesday, the 12th, Rev. Pentti, accompanied by Pastor Flores and Miss Leticia Flores, made three courtesy visits to the pastors of the Methodist, Baptist and Pentecostal churches. These visits were in every sense cordial and served as an opportunity to share experiences.

(Continued on p. 10)



Welcome to Pastor Pentti in the St. Carlos Airport in Leon.

editorials

THANKSGIVING AND THE WORD

This issue has a two-pronged emphasis: Thanksgiving Day and Bible Sunday. The latter is getting added attention in this Year of the Bible.

The two topics are closely aligned, Thanksgiving and the Bible. Reading through the Scriptures one comes now and again to words of praise and thanksgiving to God the Father-Creator and Jesus the Son-Redeemer. Always we associate the Psalms particularly with adoration and the giving of thanks. Pastor James Olson has called one Psalm to our attention in his article, Psalm 100, and there are many others.

In any list of things for which to be grateful the Bible will be in the Christian's top two or three. And there are many other things, so many that he must use the phraseology of the auction sale bill and say of them that they are "too numerous to mention." But let not that keep anyone from enumerating some of them.

Yes, we have received much. We have it good. Recently we have read of a newcomer to England from the Orient who wished to see the poor people of London. She was dutifully shown the slums of London, but then replied that she wanted to see the *really* poor people. The fact was that she had seen poverty so much greater than London could offer where she had come from. The same would be true in America, that is, our poor have so much more than the really impoverished areas of the world. Let us not be complacent about our poor, but at the same time we must be a thankful, grateful people that we do have so much.

And the Bible, lifelong companion and friend. What would life be without the Scriptures? Thank God we do not have to find out. The Word is here and shall remain while time lasts.

This Book has a fascinating history and a life-changing message. Perhaps some time you can spend time in your parish looking at the history of the Bible. This could be done in most any of the organizations, maybe even in Sunday morning or evening sermons. Quite likely, many of our people don't know that much about how our Bible came to us and about the various translations.

The Bible has a life-changing message. We are always challenged and thrilled by the stories our Gideon friends tell us about how lives have been changed as people have picked up a Bible or New Testament and read. Lives of hopelessness have been made purposeful. People who have felt hemmed in like a trapped and doomed animal have found life and meaning through the Savior Christ of the Scriptures. The same transformations occur also through other evangelization efforts and the faithful ongoing week by week preaching and teaching of the Word. "And let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9).

We endorse the idea of the Year of the Bible. But the Bible must not be allowed to become less to us when the year is over. The only worthy result is that it becomes *more*. Even as the Christian must grow in dependence upon the Lord with each passing day, so must his love for the blessed Word increase. "Oh, how I love Thy law (and Gospel)! It is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97).

May you have a blessed Bible Sunday (Nov. 20) and Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 24) in your parish.

WORK IN CANADA

Our list of Canadian subscribers jumped greatly when congregation members at Lake Alma, Sask., joined our family of readers. We welcome them and trust that *The Lutheran Ambassador* will be of help to them in getting better acquainted with their new church fellowship.

In writing of Thanksgiving Day and Bible Sunday we realize we may not be accommodating them very well. Canadians have already had their Thanksgiving Day (Oct. 10) and we are not sure what their plans are for a Bible Sunday. But they will have to bear with us.

Rev. Philip Rokke has gone to Lake Alma to become our first pastor to serve an AFLC congregation full-time in Canada. Pastor Rokke is our devotional writer (page 2 every issue) at the present time and his article this time is the first to come from Saskatchewan.

We trust that Pastor Rokke and his people will tell us more about their congregation and how things are going as time goes on. We'd like to hear.

When the AFLC began it was thought that there would be Association congregations in Canada. For that reason a statement to that effect was placed in the Bible histories used in our confirmation classes. It was never true, that we had congregations in Canada, but now it is becoming true.

How much outreach the AFLC should make in Canada is an open question. There could be numerous opportunities. But so much depends on finances and men available. It would be good if there could be enough work so that fellowship could be established among a number of congregations in the Prairie Provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta) and, if doors opened, also in British Columbia.

For those of us who live in Canada or have lived there, it is good to know that an AFLC presence has been established there. And should it grow, as we hope it will, there will be opportunity for those who wish to serve also in that sister country.

SEVERAL THINGS

There are several items in this issue that make us especially happy. One is the article by George Johnson of our church in Eben Jct., Mich., about a prison ministry in which he is involved as a layman. In Matthew 25

◇

MEXICO . . .

6. The visit to the Gethsemane congregation in Celaya on Wednesday, the 13th, was also of great inspiration for the brethren who met there. After they served breakfast, we held a beautiful worship service with the preaching of Pastor Pentti, interpreted by Miss Flores.
7. The visit of Rev. Pentti to the Vacation Bible School on Friday, the 15th, was very much appreciated. Both the teachers and the children were very pleased and expressed their love to the one who was visiting and who greeted them with words which were full of Christian love.

Sunday, the 17th of July, at 5:00 p.m., a congregation of 72 persons, counting both children and adults,

celebrated the 14th anniversary of the Lutheran work in Leon. We received the last sermon of Rev. Pentti at the conclusion of this evangelistic campaign. The joy was unspeakable! At the end, seven persons representing the congregation, expressed their love and their appreciation to Pastor Pentti and invited him to return to Mexico. One sister, full of joy, told Rev. Pentti, "We will never forget you."

The fiesta began on the 10th of this month. A small group of brethren welcomed Rev. Pentti to the San Carlos Airport of the City of Leon, and that evening a group of young men portrayed a simple, but animated program of Mexican folklore. The congregation gave thanks to the Lord for the presence of His Holy Spirit, who gave us His inspiration during the campaign.

The seed has been sown. The Lord

will cause it to grow and the fruit will come in its time. The preaching of Rev. Pentti has made a powerful impact on the faith of several brethren, which as a single message can be summed up in the following way: "It is necessary that every soul which has accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior must bear the fruit of works which give glory to God. We understand further that the Lord does not ask of the believers things that are impossible to do, but rather natural things which everyone can also do in a natural way. He in His infinite love accomplishes the supernatural, that is to say, the miracle of making in us all things new. By His Holy Spirit which dwells in us we are temples of God. It is necessary that each one be of the same mind, which was also in Christ Jesus, and that we encourage brotherly love in the church. All this



Pastor Pentti with Mrs. Celia Betancour, center, and Miss Leticia Flores.



Gethsemane Lutheran Congregation in Celaya following a worship service. Pastor Pentti and Lay Pastor Milton Flores are shown at the left.

EDITORIALS . . .

Jesus says that going to visit the one in prison is a work done unto Him.

It is good to know that Association people (George isn't the only one) are involved in visiting jails and prisons in the name of Christ. May there be more. The need is so great. Thank you, George, for telling us about it, and your feelings. May this be an encouragement to others to share ways in which they are witnessing for Jesus.

We're happy for the article by Pastor Samuel Flores about the evangelistic mission carried on in July by our evangelist, Rev. Kenneth Pentti. We have needed more news from our work in Mexico and this article as well as a forthcoming one by the Leonard Swansons of Nogales, Ariz., who have since visited Leon, Mexico,

and environs, tell us much more about what is being done. We look forward to hearing more, too, from India.

Finally, we call attention to the Letter to the Editor and the news about our very new congregation in Tucson. Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Myron (Orville and Iris) for bringing us up to date on how things are going in getting your fine new church building in readiness. May you have many visitors from up north this winter (if they must leave us).

It is good to keep in touch, to keep one another informed. Let us encourage you to do that. Send in news from home and abroad. Give us your testimonies of how God is working in your life or in a friend. Let us know of some special ministry you or someone you know in the AFLC is carrying on. These will glorify God, encourage others and build the fellowship.

is the responsibility of each believer, and his testimony should be a constant sermon, constant preaching, so that death and hell are forever destroyed."

The Lutheran Congregations of Leon and Celaya, and the brethren of Irapuato, together with their pastors, Rev. Samuel R. Flores and Professor Milton Flores, express their deep appreciation for the ministry of Rev. Pentti in this Crusade, and for his willingness to visit us and demonstrate his love for the work in Mexico. May the Lord grant that we have him again among us. We express our appreciation also to our mother church, the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, and particularly to Rev. Eugene W. Enderlein, Director of World Missions, for sponsoring this effort which has brought praise and glory to our God.

"We always give thanks to the Lord for your communion in the Gospel from the first day until now, being persuaded of this that the Lord who began among us His work will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:3-6).

(The above article was translated from Spanish to English.)

God's Word is our great
heritage,
And shall be ours forever;
To spread its light from age to
age
Shall be our chief endeavor;
Through life it guides our
way,
In death it is our stay;
Lord, grant while worlds
endure,
We keep its teachings pure,
Throughout all generations.

N.F.S. Grundtvig
(*The Concordia Hymnal*)

A vital issue for our day

EVANGELIZATION OF THE BAPTIZED

Dr. Trygve R. Skarsten
Trinity Lutheran Seminary
Columbus, Ohio

The Second of three Parts

(Continuing, *The Evangelization of the Baptized Believer*)

For the baptized believer who is anxious and troubled about his spiritual condition there is no greater comfort than to recall one's baptism. When Satan buffets and tosses the Christian to and fro and mockingly asks, "How can you be a Christian?" turn the tables on him and recall your baptism, says Luther. "To appreciate and use Baptism aright, we must draw strength and comfort from it when our sins or consciences oppress us and we must retort, "But I am baptized" "¹⁵ No wonder Luther valued baptism so highly. Here was a tool in pastoral care that a *seelsorge* could ill afford to cast aside. Here the "evangel," the good news of God's redeeming love, became clear.

Melanchthon echoes the same thought in his *Loci* when he says:

The godly are mortified but in such a way that they rest in the sepulcher of Christ, that is, they believe that He is the way to life. . . . Baptism is the pledge and reminder of that consolation. . . . As a sign of divine grace, baptism kindles faith. In my opinion, no one can very easily express how rich a consolation for the troubled conscience this use of baptism is.¹⁶

Salvation is a gift from above; it is all of grace, unconditioned and unmotivated by any goodness or merit in us. Yet it is not *ex opere operato*! It is a treasure which God seeks to give us and which faith receives. "Faith is the only possible attitude in which grace is truly the grace of God."¹⁷

Here it is well to heed the words of Herbert Girgensohn, professor at the Lirchliche Hochschule in Bethel, Germany, when he says:

It must be said that the church in emphasizing the divine act has almost lost sight of the human response. Baptism then becomes an

act that happens to a person as if he were simply a lifeless object. It becomes an *opus operatum* which leaves out of account the participation of the person.¹⁸

As a result, opposition to the disparagement of the human response lifts its head and at times runs the danger of turning faith into a human activity or work that practically denies the divine reality in baptism. A one-sided emphasis on divine action in order to uphold the doctrine of grace can unwittingly lead to a view of the sacrament that construes baptism as an *opus operatum* in which the subjective response of faith is scarcely viewed as necessary. It is no wonder that some have seen in baptism a virtual impediment to evangelism when so little connection has been seen at times between baptism and the ongoing Christian life of faith and growth in sanctification. Girgensohn makes the astute observation that

the biblical understanding of baptism for which Luther is contending brings both sides together in a proper relationship . . . It is easy to understand that this whole matter should express itself in a tension within the church that must necessarily be part of its life. When the church threatens to fall into the false peace of *opus operatum* the constantly disturbing reaction sets in, and the reaction in turn runs into the danger of demanding a legalistically prescribed activity on the part of man . . . The tension between Word and response finds expression in this tension within the church which we must not try to evade but rather face. This tension is what constitutes the living, vital element in baptism.¹⁹

To be grafted into Christ, to be born anew of water and the Spirit, is not the end of our relationship with Christ but the beginning! It is intended that this covenant relationship grow, deepen, and mature over the years. What a tool we have in our

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BAPTIZED . . .

hands for the evangelization of the baptized believer but how seldom we utilize it! So often we cast away our Lutheran birthright for a mess of theological porridge, not realizing that in our baptismal theology we have the foundation for an evangelical understanding of sanctification. By sanctification I mean not only growth in personal piety and holiness but also growth in love and commitment for the Lord's creation and an awareness of the hurt, injustice, and poverty that surrounds us so that we will be filled with zeal and passion as individuals and as a church to do the work of evangelization that the Lord has committed to us. Sanctification and the task of the evangelization of the baptized involve both the vertical *and* the horizontal dimensions of the Christian faith.

"So often we cast away our Lutheran birthright for a mess of theological porridge. . ."

Once again it is interesting to note how Luther went about the task of evangelizing the baptized believer. Though sanctification was not the focal point of his struggle with Rome, Luther was concerned that it be understood in an evangelical manner so that the Pelagian leaven of Rome did not sneak in the back door while the doctrine of justification was being dusted off on the front porch. The whole quest for a deeper life with God, the whole quest for holiness on the part of a believer, is a work of God. At no time is it sustained by our initiative and drive. Yet through baptism we have been given a new nature. The second Adam has come to indwell us and that word of forgiveness possesses the power to produce in the hearer through faith a new life force that revolutionizes one's being, values, outlook on life, priorities, direction, and vocation. Listen to what Adolf Köberle in his classic exposition of sanctification has to say:

It is not the support and strengthening of the old will as it already exists but a completely new creation . . . The believer who does not withstand the Word

but rejects the natural evil condition of life, is permitted to receive in secret the newly aroused impulses of the Spirit. He then receives new spiritual powers and abilities not only in his will but in the totality of his existence, including his powers of emotion and understanding. Freedom is attained in faith (II Cor. 3:17). With a power of volition that has been awakened to new life by the Holy Ghost he is able to love and serve God, and his freedom grows, when rightly used and exercised . . . It possesses a new activity and with a new ability to act also a new sense of obligation.²⁰

The evangelization of the baptized involves equipping and aiding the believer to grow in Christ and in his fervency and love for the Lord so that rooted first in Christ's love made manifest initially in one's baptism, the believer is thrust into mission and ministry. Baptism "is the joy of forgiveness which sends the believer back out into the world of water and sun, of light and cereal, of engines and ballots and washing machines. Baptism intends the totality of the forgiven life in the midst of the world."²¹

In baptism I am committed to doing His will and serving Him and those whom He loved and for whom He died. Or as Luther put it in his 1520 tract on "The Freedom of a Christian":

A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all. . . . This is that Christian liberty, our faith, which does not induce us to live in idleness or wickedness but makes the law and works unnecessary for any man's righteousness and salvation. . . . He does the works out of spontaneous love in obedience to God and considers nothing except the approval of God, whom he would most scrupulously obey in all things. . . . A Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and in

"In baptism I am committed to doing His will and serving Him and those whom He loved and for whom He died."

his neighbor through love. By faith he is caught up beyond himself into God. By love he descends beneath himself into his neighbor.²²

Baptism thrusts me out of my self-centered world so that I become, as it were, "christ" for my neighbor. I therefore want to share in the evangelization process to which my Lord has committed me when He lifted me out of the waters of my baptism.

My Christian sisters and brothers, listen to the apostle Paul as he asks: How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with him *by baptism* into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life . . . We know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin . . . The death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:3-11).

If you have been baptized into Christ (and I assume all of you have been), how can you continue to live in sin? How can you continue to flirt with sin? How can you continue to walk in the old ruts, living defeated lives and not walk in the waters of your baptism, in newness of life? Notice how the apostle Paul exhorts his readers. It is not with a new legalism whereby he whips his audience into shape. Rather the love of Christ is held high for all to see. The paramount sign of Christ's death and resurrection is baptism. In baptism is symbolized the infinite and eternal love of Christ.

Want to know how to become motivated to live for Christ, to love Him more, to be more fervent in witnessing for Christ and be about your task of the evangelization of the baptized? Recall your baptism and its significance! This is exactly what Luther does in his 1519 sermon on baptism as he talks about sanctification:

The significance of baptism—the
(Continued on p. 15)

THE WOMEN'S PAGE

Cradle Roll . . . AMERY, WIS.



Pictured are seven new members of Amery Free Lutheran Cradle Roll. Sitting (L. to R.): Donna Nelson and Jason, Jackie Rosenbush and Jodi, Debbie Christopherson and Kassie. Standing: LeAnn Marson and Kesha and Kellen, Mary Cahill and Matthew, Jeannie Brandt and Ona. Absent are Tessa Fahrendholz and Sarah Gehrman.

SPICER, MINN.



Green Lake Lutheran Church honored their Cradle Roll members. Pictured are: Craig Knudsen and Kellie, Renae Carter and Krista, Anita Stulen and Jared, Linda Nelson and Lisa, Ginny Knapp and Michael.

Honorary Memberships . . . EVERETT, WASH.



Calvary Lutheran WMF president, Mrs. Duane Forsberg presented honorary memberships pins to Hellene Jensen and Olga Boeckman.

RAY, N. DAK.

Beaver Creek Lutheran recently enrolled Daniel Hartsoch, Darrin Hauge and Roxanne Addicott. Royce Stockman, Angila Stockman, Kevin Hauge and Clint Kingstad graduated from the Cradle Roll.



The children's special table at Green Lake's Cradle Roll party.



TIOGA, N. DAK.

Zion WMF honored Mrs. Llew Pederson for 25 years of membership and service. Mrs. Grace Syverson and Mrs. Pederson's daughter, Rachel are pictured with Mrs. Pederson. The In Memoriam program paid tribute to the memory of Arlene Iversen and Anna Belle Knutson.

SPICER, MINN.



Mrs. Harold Krause and Mrs. Trygve Dahle were recently honored by Green Lake WMF. This being the centennial year, all 30 ladies who have received Honorary Memberships were seated at a special table.

just thinking . . .

Thankfulness is our crowning glory. The soul untouched by this emotion is without the quickening power which marks the difference between life and death. We must bring the fruitage of a happy, grateful soul to the throne of God, or else we come before Him empty-handed. If we come not with smiles of grateful appreciation, we walk in darkness. If we carry no share of another's burden, we may still be weighted with a crushing load. If we lend no hand to a fellow wayfarer, we grope in vain for friendship. If we step not aside to give a firmer footing to a fallen brother, we fetter our own feet.

—Author unknown

With our Evangelist-Youth Worker

"Him who comes to Me I will not cast out" (John 6:37b). So spoke Jesus. He also said, "I am the Bread of Life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). Pray for our evangelist, Rev. Kenneth Pentti, as he brings the Gospel invitation in the following evangelistic missions.

Beltrami, Minn.

Beltrami Lutheran Parish (ALC)

Nov. 20-22

Rolph Heng, pastor

Abercrombie, N. Dak.

Bethany Lutheran Church

Nov. 30-Dec. 4

Robert Lewis, pastor

Woodland, Mich.

Kilpatrick United Brethren

in Christ Church

Dec. 7-11

George Speas, pastor

Rev. Maynard Force passed away

Rev. Maynard A. Force, 79, Bible teacher, pastor and author, passed away on Oct. 1 in Minneapolis, Minn. He was a beloved pastor and teacher and once headed the California Lutheran Bible Institute in Los Angeles.

He was also at one time a pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls, Minneapolis, where his funeral was held on Oct. 4. A second

service was held at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Two Harbors, Minn., and burial was at Two Harbors.

A clergyman of the Augustana Synod, then of the Lutheran Church in America, Pastor Force is survived by one son, three daughters, 11 grandchildren and two sisters.

Blessed be his memory among us.

In Memoriam

Key: The name of the town is the address of the deceased. Following that is listed the name of the deceased, age, date of death, and the church in which he or she held membership.

NORTH DAKOTA

McGregor

Mrs. Morris (Eileen) Gohrick, 70,

Sept. 7, St. Olaf

SOUTH DAKOTA

Roslyn

Theodore (Ted) Moen, 78, Sept. 25,

Saron

BE YE THANKFUL

Trusting God as Savior, we can be thankful for the following:

Transforming power - Ps. 40:2
His holiness - Rev. 4:8b
A present salvation - Rom. 10:9, 10; Col. 1:12
New life - II Cor. 5:17
Keeping power - John 10:28
Shelter from the stormy blast - Ps. 61:3
Gift of His Son - II Cor. 9:15
Innner Peace - John 14:27
Victory - I Cor. 15:57
Inheritance - Col. 1:12
Nearness for the alien - Eph. 2:13
God's goodness - I Chron. 16:34

Our thanks to God, who keeps on giving.

—B. J. Stone

Faith and Stillwater
Lutheran Churches, Kalispell, Mont.



Letters to the editor

Update on Tucson

We wanted to thank you for the nice article and the picture you put in the *Ambassador* (July 19) after your trip here. You would not even recognize the building now!

First the sewer had to be dug and that turned out to be much less of a problem than anticipated. We found a Christian man who was familiar with the ground in that area, experienced in digging and installing plumbing, and his final bill was around \$3000, instead of closer to the \$15,000 which we were afraid of. Extra insulation has been installed all over. Windows were put in above the four outside doors, and lengthwise under the ceilings in the two Sunday School rooms. Now one can walk around without turning on the lights. Exterior doors were put in, in place of the interior doors which they had used as exterior

doors, and deadbolt locks are on all doors. Orville has been putting in all the conduit pipe and switch boxes, ready for the electrician to soon do the technical wiring. Much of the outside of the building has been painted white, the wood portions. A double sign stands near the road, advertising "Future Home of Living Faith Free Lutheran Church." The big item waiting for a decision right now is the best and most efficient type of heating-cooling equipment available for the lowest cost. Orville has received bids from three or four places.

We praise God for His guidance and help in so many ways in the work being done at our little church. We still hope to be in there before Christmas!

Orville and Iris Myron,
Tucson, Ariz.

WORD OF GOD . . .

When the invitation came, he stumbled forward, knelt and prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner and save me now for Jesus' sake." From that mourner's bench he started the upward road.

That was a rescue mission story. Other stories of change could be told from other times and circumstances. Stories of lives made new. Some of you can thank back to a time of conversion in your own life. To those of you who sit or stand in the far country I say simply, "What He's done for others He can do for you." He really can. God can.

And the Word is a guide. As we've said, it is a lamp to the feet and a light to the pathway. The Bible can light up the dark corners of sorrow and discouragement and point out the direction to take. Let the Word be that for you. Thank God for the "Everlasting Light."

Willmar church celebrates anniversary

The 20th Anniversary of Zion Lutheran Church of Willmar, Minn., was observed on Sunday, September 11. The theme was "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)" Hebrews 10:2, and the theme song was "Great Is Thy Faithfulness."

The regular worship service started at 9:00 a.m., with the message being brought by Rev. R. Snipstead, president of the AFLC. Special music for the day was furnished by the Zion Ladies Chorus, a group of girls, and a duet by Esther and Leland Floren.

A fellowship dinner was served at noon and the afternoon service began at 2:00, with Rev. John Strand, former president of the AFLC, bringing the message. Greetings were read from former pastors Rev. Leslie Galland and Rev. Hubert DeBoer, and also from the Faith Lutheran Church of Granite Falls. Greetings were also given by Rev. T. F. Dahle, by Rev. Marvin Haara, who served part-time while attending seminary, and by Wm. Block, Jr., chairman of the Green Lake Lutheran Church, Spicer. Following the afternoon session, lunch and a time of fellowship were enjoyed in the church basement.

Rev. Dennis Gray is pastor of Zion.

—Corr.

BAPTIZED . . .

dying or drowning of sin—is not fulfilled completely in this life. Indeed this does not happen until man passes through bodily death and completely decays to dust. As we can plainly see, the sacrament or sign of baptism is quickly over.

Personalities

Mr. Johan Koren, 1983 graduate of Association Free Lutheran Seminary, has been called to serve Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Bessemer, Mich., and was ordained and installed there on Sunday, Oct. 23. He has been serving there for a number of months.

Evangelist Philip Hanson of the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement spoke at special meetings in Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Bessemer, Oct. 30-Nov. 4.

Rev. Willmore Gunderson, Lutheran Brethren pastor at Cooperstown, N. Dak., spoke at evangelistic meetings in Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Thief River Falls, Minn., Oct. 23-27.

Rev. Sterling Johnson, LEM evangelist, was the guest speaker at a preaching mission in Hegland Lutheran Church, rural Strandquist, Minn., beginning on Oct. 2.

Lay pastor Verle Dean, Sedan, Minn., spoke at special meetings in Hope Lutheran Church, Sisseton, S. Dak., and Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church, Eden, S. Dak., Oct. 16-20.

But the spiritual baptism, the drowning of sin, which it signifies, lasts as long as we live and is completed only in death. Then it is that a person is completely sunk in baptism, and that which baptism signifies comes to pass.

Therefore this whole life is nothing else than a spiritual baptism which does not cease till death, and he who is baptized is condemned to die. It is as if the priest, when he baptizes, were to say, "Lo you are sinful flesh. Therefore I drown you in God's name and in His name condemn you to death, so that with you all your sins may die and be destroyed" . . . Therefore the life of a Christian, from baptism to the grave, is nothing else than the beginning of a blessed death.

Similarly the lifting up out of the baptismal water is quickly done, but the thing it signifies—the spiritual birth and the increase of grace and righteousness—even though it begins in baptism, lasts until death, until the Last Day. Only then will that be finished which the lifting up out of baptism signifies.²³

It is obvious for Luther, that baptism has significance for all of life and not just for the start of one's life. Baptism initiates one into a personal relationship with Christ wherein the devil and all his works and all his ways are renounced. It is this faith and out of this promise that the Christian lives his daily existence and recalls his baptism. As s/he does so, they renew their baptismal vow to live for Christ through faith in Him who died and rose that they might have life and have it more abundantly. That abundant life in Christ is found only as one renounces the devil and all his works and all his ways, in other words, as one recalls his baptism.

It is not a case of God wanting us "Dead or Alive," as the old Western sheriff's want ad had it. No, God has His want ad posted but it reads: "Wanted: Dead *and* Alive!" God wants Christians who are dead to sin *and* alive to God in Christ Jesus. Those want ads of God refer to your

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ASSOCIATION OF FREE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS 3110 EAST MEDICINE LAKE BOULEVARD MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55441

Budget Receipts February 1-September 30

FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% of TOTAL (Ideal 67%)
General Fund	\$187,180.00	\$ 79,914.94	43
Schools — AFLTS	97,246.00	36,307.87	37
AFLBS	164,839.00	65,757.77	40
Home Missions	219,796.00	73,121.77	33
World Missions	265,975.00	99,786.02	38
Praise Fund	28,880.00	18,288.91	63
TOTAL	\$963,916.00	\$373,177.03	39
1982-83	\$914,003.00	\$391,106.09	43

O WORD OF GOD INCARNATE

O Word of God incarnate,
O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged,
unchanging,
O Light of our dark sky;
We praise Thee for the
radiance
That from the hallowed page,
A lamp unto our footsteps,
Shines on from age to age.

The church from her dear
Master
Received the gift divine,
And still that light she lifted
O'er all the earth to shine.
It is the golden casket
Where gems of truth are
stored;
It is the heav'n-drawn picture
Of Christ, the living Word.

It floateth like a banner
Before God's host unfurled;
It shineth like a beacon
Above the darkling world;
It is the chart and compass
That o'er life's surging sea,
Amid the rocks and quicksands
Still guides, O Christ, to Thee.

William W. How
(*The Concordia Hymnal*)

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minn. 55441

Second-class postage
paid at Minneapolis, Minn.



Martin Luther

Martin Luther:
500 years

Luther and the Word

Now this is precisely what Luther did in the time of the Reformation—brought the people back to God's Word. Every true revival in the history of the Church is a return to the pure fountains of Israel. Liberalism never brought about a true spiritual revival. Every departure from the Word of God has been accompanied by a corresponding decadence of spiritual religion. How necessary it was for a return to God's Word in the dark period of the 16th century! . . . It is true, indeed, that individuals and

churches can win real liberty only through the truth of God's Word. The appeal to the Scriptures as the final and infallible standard was one of the cardinal principles of the Reformation. Without that principle there would have been no such epoch in the world's history. The old ways of bondage to sin and human devices and ordinances would have continued. It is the truth that makes men free; and the most potent truth is that which is found in the Holy Bible.

L. S. Keyser

BAPTIZED . . .

baptism and mine! They talk about repentance and faith—a daily return to baptism. For “what is repentance but an earnest attack on the old man and an entering upon a new life? If you live in repentance, therefore, you are walking in (your) Baptism” says Luther.²⁴

Far from being a sleeping pillow, or an insurance policy, or a one-time event in our lives, baptism thrusts us daily back upon the Lord where we experience God's grace and His forgiving love anew. As forgiven child-

ren we not only bask in the joy of forgiveness but, if sanctification means anything, it means we are thrust out into the world of wind and storm, injustice and ignorance, prejudice and racism, pollution and poverty in order to be His ambassadors, “God making His appeal through us” (II Cor. 5:17-20).

Endnotes

¹⁵LC IV, 44. (BC, p. 442); Also *ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁶Pauck, *Melanchthon and Bucer*, p. 138.

¹⁷Regin Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, translated by John M. Jensen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1953), p. 134.

¹⁸Herbert Girgensohn, *Teaching Luther's*

Catechism, 2 vols. translated by John W. Doberstein (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), 2:50.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 51

²⁰Adolf Köberle, *The Quest for Holiness*, translated from 3rd German edition by John C. Matthes (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1938, pp. 148-149.

²¹Martin E. Marty, *Baptism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962), p. 10.

²²Martin Luther, “The Freedom of a Christian,” *Luther's Works*, Volume 31 edited by Harold J. Grimm (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), pp. 344, 349-350, 359, 371.

²³Luther, “The Blessed Sacrament of Baptism,” *LW* 35:30-31.

²⁴Luther, LC IV, 75. (BC, p. 445

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(To be continued)