

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

September 27, 1983



Roger C. Huebner, D.D.S.

autumn thoughts

*Listen to the blackbird's
song!*

*A symphony light and gay,
the strains swell forth most
rapturously*

*before the ebb of day.
They've gathered together in
numbers strong,
They know it can't be long
Till these warm times are
whisked away—
Till the north wind brings that
colder day.*

*They've felt the currents;
they've heard the gong—
They are not sad to be a-
going.*

*They know what the future
holds;*

*They're all all prepared to
make the flight,
Happily gone before the
snowing!*

*O gather the peoples into the
folds;
Sing the songs of love and
light.*

—Mrs. Gustav Nordvall
Roseau, Minn.

AT THE MASTER'S FEET



Pastor Philip Rokke

To God be the glory

"But let the brother of humble circumstances glory in his high position; and let the rich man glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away" (James 1:9-10).

Circumstances and position mean a great deal in society. People are rated according to what they possess. It is assumed that, because of the opportunities that exist, the gifted will prosper. It is also assumed that gifted people are more valuable. But, Solomon tells us, "I again saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, and the battle is not to the warriors,

and neither is bread to the wise, nor wealth to the discerning, nor favor to men of ability; for time and chance overtake them all" (Eccles. 9:11). It is God's hand that rules in all of these things. He assigns us our role and watches over us in it.

We recognize the corruption of human nature and the error of its judgments. Men glory in conquest even over the innocent, in wit even when it produces smut, and in wealth even when it is fraudulently acquired. Yet, we are influenced by them. We want the respect and admiration of such people. But God is not awed by such admiration. He will humble those who exalt themselves and exalt those who humble themselves. The kings of Israel furnish examples.

David was the youngest in his family. While his brothers were off seeking the glory of military conquest, he was left to tend the sheep. Surely it was a tedious responsibility, but he was conscientious. On those rare occasions when the sheep were in jeopardy from natural predators, he defended them at risk to his own life. God noted his faithfulness and David became Israel's greatest king.

Things went very differently for David's son. Solomon didn't have to start at the bottom. He was given authority, wealth and wisdom without first proving himself. For a time he, too, was faithful to his task, but eventually he became reckless. He began to practice idolatry. "So the Lord said to Solomon, 'Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will

surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant'" (I Kings 11:11).

We should make the most of the abilities God has given us, not for our own glory, but to bring glory to God. We have no greater honor than to be His representatives. Our lives should show forth His goodness in all things.

If it seems that He has given us little ability and humble tasks, we must remember that He has done so for a purpose. He will not require more than we are able to deliver. We may not experience the admiration of our fellow men, but we can be assured of the glory of heaven.

There is one final thought that we should note in this connection.

"My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, 'You sit here in a good place,' and you say to the poor man, 'You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,' have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?" (James 2:1-5).

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by Rev. Dennis
Gray, Spicer,
Minn.

Georg Sverdrup was one of the founders of the Lutheran Free Church. Pastor John M. Stensvaag spoke about Georg Sverdrup when Pastor Stensvaag spoke to the 52nd Annual Conference of the Lutheran Free Church, held in Willmar, Minn.. Parts of his message to that conference are referred to in the body of this paper.

In the book titled *Our Fellowship*, edited by A. B. Batalden and printed by the Messenger Press, the following was written, "From across the seas in a distant land of rugged mountains and placid fjords they brought a vision—a vision that was brighter and more compelling than ever in the distinctively democratic atmosphere of the new land. Here they would walk closely with the Lord and join hands in warm fellowship to build self-governing congregations where vital spiritual living might flourish. They were not separatistic, but the inner compulsion of their vision gave them courage to stand alone, a small flock, when others forsook them."

There was one thing for which Georg Sverdrup, "Father" of the Lutheran Free Church, labored and spent his time promoting. This was the vision of free and living congregations on American soil. Sverdrup (1848-1907) wanted to see this New Testament concept put into action. We of the AFLC continue to share in this vision.

First, he could see little evidence of ecclesiastical dominance in the pages of the New Testament. The local congregation, as led by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, was the right form of the Kingdom of God on earth. No man or group of men should dictate to the local congregation. This is what makes a congregation free. This is what Georg Sverdrup meant by free congregations. This is what the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations means by the word free.

Dr. Stensvaag also maintained the

SVERDRUP'S VISION



the New Testament
concept of
free and living
congregations

local congregation was to be free from any kind of worldliness. It was to be a fellowship of the saved. Free also meant to be free from sin. And, this was to be accomplished through direct, fearless, Spirit-filled preaching of the Word of God. This was to be accomplished through God-given revival. When these things are seen, then a free congregation emerges. If a congregation strays from these things, it ceases to be a congregation.

And, by living congregations Sverdrup meant that the local congregation was to become a fellowship of believers where the gifts of God were to be encouraged and expressed. Primarily, his emphasis was upon the activity of the Christian laity within the congregation. In other words, a living congregation was to be composed of "saved listeners and saved workers, both." Everyone who knows Christ will strive to put their gifts and talents to work for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sverdrup maintained that it was possible to have a concern for the souls of men and yet not have a desire to see truly living congregations develop and grow. People could be seen as listeners only and not as being both listeners and workers. There must be an availability for

"No man nor group of men
should dictate to the local
congregation."

work in the congregation and willingness to do that work. When these things are present, a living congregation is present. Important to Sverdrup's vision is the New Testament teaching of the church being Christ's body. Every part has a function upon which the entire body depends, no part being unneeded or unused.

No talent was to go unused. All gifts were to be put to use. Sverdrup strongly favored the use of lay activity in the congregation. And, it is this use of lay activity which makes the local congregation living. A living, active church is not the responsibility totally of the pastor, but of both pastor and laity together, as a team.

Sverdrup made it perfectly clear that all free and living congregations will back up the Lord's work with prayer. Only as the believers pray, in their own private prayer closets, and in groups, will they see their congregations become truly living. Then and only then will they see their gifts used. "Living congregations are praying congregations."

Next, he emphasized that living congregations are to be involved in witnessing. This meant frequent testimony meetings where Christians could share with one another. It also meant the Christian lay people would take on the responsibility of personal evangelism, even being willing to do some preaching of the Word of God.

Living congregations will also have a zeal for the instruction of the young. And they would have a vital

◇

VISION . . .

interest in missions, desiring to send out missionaries and to co-operate in other means which can bring the Gospel to people both far and near.

The real mark of a living congregation, said Sverdrup, is to be a love for souls. Sunday would be set aside to do spiritual work. (Not meaning to neglect other days, but to use Sunday as a day especially set aside.) Every free and living congregation acknowledges these goals not only in word but in action. This is a New Testament concept. The congregation which acknowledges these goals and also which walks in true repentance will become a living congregation.

Also, one of the components of free and living congregations is fellowship. Fellowship is one of the most healing forces in the congregation. The living congregation should strive for unity of purpose, in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a must if we are to reach the goals set before us.

Emphasized in this New Testament vision was the conviction that every organization should be a congregation-wide fellowship. That is, the men, women, children and youth would attend all meetings, whether Luther League, Ladies Aid (WMF) or men's group. He maintained that dividing up often causes the fellowship of a congregation to disintegrate. The organization can become more important than the fellowship of the congregation.

Dr. Stensvaag maintained that many have lost the original vision of Sverdrup. We do not have the zeal necessary for free and living congregations or to be part of such. And it may very well be that the Lord is pointing His finger at many of us, saying, maybe you are the one without the vision. Maybe when we feel His pointing finger we will see the need for revival and the need for free and living congregations. Do we want such?

"The pastor, according to Sverdrup, must seek to foster the gifts of grace God has given His people."

We must realize, all of us, that each has a ministry as a Christian. Strong lay activity is vital to healthy congregations, to free and living congregations.

One of the signs of Christ's second coming is to be apathy. Many Christians have neglected their personal ministry and have engaged in the business of playing hot potato with the kingdom work. They may blame the pastor for the lacks in the local congregation and the pastor may blame them. If a congregation is to be free and living it must get beyond that stage and take on the responsibility of the work, putting its gifts to work for Christ.

The pastor, according to Sverdrup, must seek to foster the gifts of grace God has given his people. He is to see that no talent goes unused. He is to see that every talent is fully expressed, not to do all or most of the work.

At the most, we must recognize that the congregation is a human institution. We each bring into it all our frailties and sins. We are failures and we may even feel that way. Yet, the New Testament vision of Georg Sverdrup is ever before us in the AFLC. The entire congregation must go forward, doing its best to be free and living.

Consider Christ's temptation in the wilderness. Christ has the vision of the kingdom of God. Satan rose up before Him and offered another kingdom and at less cost and sacrifice, without the cross. Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." This was as if to say, "Get out of the line of my vision! Don't obstruct my goals." Are we willing to do likewise? A great New Testament vision has been set before us by Georg Sverdrup. Are we willing to continue working hard to see free and living congregations? Do we really want such?

for mutual discussion

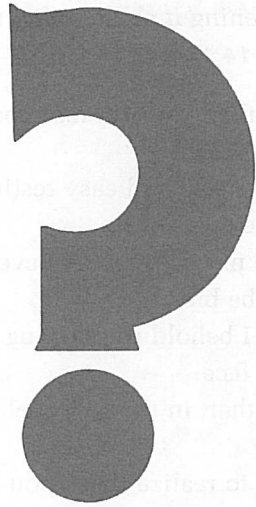
HOW LONG SHOULD A PASTORATE LAST

**By Rev. Howard A. Kuhnle
Visitation Pastor
Holy Trinity Lutheran
Church (LCA)
Buffalo, NY**

The length of pastorates is being discussed from time to time by church executives, pastors and lay people, especially in some difficult situations when pastors should move.

In most denominations the call is for life, i.e., until death, resignation or retirement. This plan is used in most Protestant churches except the Methodist which has appointments by bishops year by year.

The only other possibility than the present plan is to have so-called "term" pastorates. This is essentially the system used by Methodists. The Methodists, however, know that pastors are sure of an appointment when, at the time of the conference, changes are made. Further, there is some discussion and dissatisfaction among Methodists. It would seem to be impossible to have a "term" for non-Methodists because it is not likely that an appropriate church would be available on a given date. Terms would be absolutely impossible for independent congregations. Indeed, would it be wise to adopt a rule limiting the length of pastorates by having "term" pastorates?



Let it be acknowledged that some pastorates, even for young ministers, have lasted too long.

There are disadvantages in the present plan when pastorates last too long. Both the pastor and the congregation can get into deep ruts, doing the same things in the same way over a period of years. People and pastor commonly, then, say, "That will not work here! We tried that before! We've never done it that way!" whenever some new approach or program is suggested. A pastorate that lasts too long exposes people to the same style of pastoral service for too many years.

There are always some ministers who wish to move or who ought to move for the welfare of the congregation, but there is no place to go. For example, over 35 years ago, the executive board of a Lutheran synod covering several states discussed a list of about 30 pastors who wanted to make a change. Some did move, most of them in a short time. Some have died since then. Some remained in the same church until they retired, although this made difficult situations.

It is often hard to get a change for a pastor when the situation is untenable and impossible because there is no church available. One thinks of an impasse of pastor vs. congregation

and/or church board, with each taking a decided stand. Some pastors, especially in the past, have kept on when they were not able to do so mentally and/or physically. This was particularly true before 1955 when clergy were allowed to enter the Social Security system. Some denominations require a pastor to retire at a given age. One result of the changed conditions is that more pastors are taking early retirement and most of the rest retire at 65.

It is a terrible situation to see a minister, because of poor health, make a sorry ending lasting several years, after a long pastorate, especially if he is becoming increasingly weak physically and/or mentally. On the other hand, some ministers because they stay so long in one congregation become "dictators." A number of retired ministers secure part-time work in congregations, usually as visitors in large churches, or as interim pastors during vacancies, or as part-time pastors in small congregations, or as supply preachers when needed because of vacations or illness.

Several special circumstances should be noted. Some pastors and some congregations always have short pastorates. Assistant and associate pastors are likely to change from time to time. Membership changes are characteristic of many present-day congregations, especially in the large cities and suburbs because employees are transferred. This also brings changing lay leadership with new ideas. There are many long-time pastors who are completely alert and receptive to currents of change and growth. Their pastoral style does not become rigid.

There are real advantages in the plan of lifetime pastorates. A high level of Christian love and trust is usually built up through the years. Problems can be solved by mutual understanding because of that love. The continuity of a constructive ministry is a great asset. One does see both pastors and lay-people who are completely flexible and who are ready for new ideas.

Moreover, pastors themselves

"There are real advantages in the plan of lifetime pastorates."

readily discern when they have served a congregation long enough. When a call comes, the minister can be ready to accept it. On the other hand, if he does not receive a call, he can always consult the proper church leader (president) in his office as "pastor of pastors" for counsel regarding whether it would be better to stay or move elsewhere. Some of these leaders are easier to approach and of better understanding than others.

Every congregation should have a pastoral relations committee to keep in touch with the minister. Mutual advice is given on a confidential basis as to how everything is going in the congregation. The committee should keep in close touch with the pastor by means of scheduled meetings. Appropriate topics and problems should be under constant and careful discussion. At a proper time a decision might be made as to whether the ministry is to continue or whether the pastor should go elsewhere when an opportunity presents itself, or when he has had the opportunity to discuss the situation with the president. The church executive should be available at all times for consultation on the status of pastorates. He should be especially ready to advise as to whether it is time to move to another congregation or to remain in the present church.

CONCLUSION

So, in answer to the question in the title, the response is not going to be a strong statement of a certain number of years, but the only answer is that a pastorate should last as long as the pastor can do good work, or to put it in another way, as long as there is harmony between the pastor and the congregation.

"I'd be shot for saying these things in Russia. Still, it must be nice to get *some* kind of response."

The sentiments expressed by the pastor are probably those of many pastors. When a pastor preaches the Word of God with the desire that sinners would come to repentance and Christians would mature in their spiritual life, a lack of response is heart-breaking. It brought sadness also to Jesus when He lived on the earth.

Yet, there is always a response, for even when a person does not do what God desires for him he is making a response, albeit a negative one. Jesus said, "He that is not for Me is against Me." In other words, he that fails to respond *for* God is responding *against* God. He who doesn't obey God, disobeys God. There is no middle ground. When we find God directing us, through His Word, to do something and we let it pass over us as if it didn't apply to us, or put off acting upon it, we are not being neutral or placing ourselves on a kind of holding pattern. No, we are then rebelling against God in direct disobedience. There is no such thing as "no response." To put off acting upon something is itself a response.

Let's consider an example to illustrate this Biblical principle. The Bible instructs us in Hebrews 10:25 that we are not to stop meeting with other believers but are to assemble ourselves together for corporate worship and mutual encouragement. Now you may find many reasons for not attending a worship service. The time may be inconvenient, you can watch or listen to a service on TV or radio, there are hypocrites in church, last time you went you got nothing from the sermon, you will start attending later when the kids are grown up, and we could go on. Now if you would put your reasons for not

OBEY GOD

attending in a balance opposite God's command to attend, and would then decide that your reasons were greater than God's command, you would in effect be saying, "God, I'm not going to obey You!"

Elijah faced a situation similar to this on Mt. Carmel as recorded in I Kings 18. The people were evidently trying to straddle a fence. They didn't want to surrender fully to God but neither did they want to divorce themselves from Him completely. Elijah asks them, in verse 21, "How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal is, follow him." It is contradictory, hypocritical and stupid to believe that God is God and to then treat Him as something less by failing to surrender to Him in humble obedience. Such is the natural heart of man. Only God can change us.

Let's be careful that we respond as God desires when His Word speaks to the various areas of our lives. The words of Jesus in Matthew 7:2-23 should serve as our constant warning, "Not everyone 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. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"

God provides through Jesus. The response is up to us.

Pastor Bruce Dalager
Grand Forks, N. Dak.
(from a parish paper)

Prayer of an old disciple

"At evening it shall be light"
(Zech. 14:17).

My Father, I would rest upon
Thy Word;
I need a safe and easy resting
place
Where my faith's visit never
can be blurred,
While I behold the shining of
Thy face.
My Father, in the battlefield of
life,
I need to realize that Thou are
near;
Then, though prolonged and
fierce should be the fight
It cannot cause Thy child one
faithless fear.

My Father, soon the shadows
of the night
May dim and hide my rough
and lonely way,
As now, I then shall need Thy
guiding light
So that I may not fail nor go
astray.

My Father, I am old and
getting frail.
Alas! I am not what I used to
be;
Lest I at any time should halt,
or fail,
Do Thou uphold, or even carry
me.
My Father, many dear to me
are gone
To where the weary have
Eternal rest;
I need Thy help that I may
follow on
To where Thou art and those
whom Thou hast so blest.

—Selected

small tools but a big job

Text: "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (II Corinthians 8:12).

We shall call him Marko. He, taller than his fellows, standing full six feet, was a man of striking physique. He once carried the missionary's baggage 50 miles from the mountain top to the city, slept all night on the hard floor, then together the next morning early they started to climb back over the same ranges, in another direction, 40 miles. He walked every step of the way, fording rivers and climbing hills, winding along the trail with the stride of a giant, with 40 or 50 pounds poised gracefully on his head. One could never forget his bright face and white teeth. Men named him "Happy Face." He had learned to love Jesus and was trying to serve Him as porter for the missionary.

Marko could neither read nor write, and had never known a school, but he had a keen mind and used many interesting methods. For example: He would get someone to write on a piece of paper a simple text, like John 3:16. Meeting a traveler on the road, he would pull the paper from his pocket, saying, "Brother, can you read?" If the man could, he was usually proud of it and eager to read the note. Marko would have him read it twice, then his big, earnest eyes would come near the

stranger and he would almost whisper: "What is it, what does it mean?" And the stranger would look confused and answer, "I don't know, maybe it is from the Bible." Then the forerunner would say, "There is to be a meeting back in the village, you better come back with me and hear how the preacher explains it."

He generally started out an hour or so ahead of the missionary, in order to gather the people of the hills together for the preaching service, and as the preacher appeared, Marko would step out from the crowd, and in a voice that could be heard far down the mountainside, he would cry out, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth!"

Then, when the preacher began to deliver his message, he would set out for the next place, repeating the same work as the *forerunner of the Gospel*.

It is not the amount of our talent nor the bigness of our privileges, but the fidelity with which we do our work that counts in our stewardship. Jesus will never say, "Well done, good and *successful* steward," but He will say, "Well done, good and *faithful* steward." Like a good steward, Marko used his small gifts in a big way.

HYMN

Sing and memorize—"Jesus Bids Us Shine."

(Call particular attention to all stewardship implications in the hymn.)

Jesus bids us shine,
With a clear, pure light,
Like a little candle
Burning in the night;
In this world of darkness,
We must shine,
You in your small corner,
And I in mine.

Jesus bids us shine,
First of all for Him;
Well He sees and knows it
If our light is dim;
He looks down from heaven,
Sees us shine,
You in your small corner,
And I in mine.

Jesus bids us shine,
Then for all around,
Many kinds of darkness
In this world abound,
Sin and want and sorrow;
We must shine,
You in your small corner,
And I in mine.

TO TEACH—That every talent and capacity however small is a stewardship responsibility. Small gifts administered with fidelity may accomplish a truly big job. Recall how a lad with "five barley loaves and two small fishes" was able, with Jesus' help, to feed the Five Thousand. It is not the amount of our service but its fidelity that most counts.

—Guy L. Morrill
Stewardship Stories
Harper and Brothers Publishers



CAN THE SAVED BE KEPT?

One day a young woman came to her mother with the joyful news that Christ had saved her. But instead of expressing any joy the mother in consternation blurted out: "You don't think you can keep that, do you?"

Her question reveals two very common errors among present-day church people, of whom she was one in good standing. It implies, in the first place, that it is highly improbable that a believer will continue and be kept in the faith "until the day of Jesus Christ." In fact, according to this view, the prospect of falling away is much more certain than that of being kept. The second common error, revealed by this mother's question, is the false conception that if the believer is kept at all, it is achieved by his own intense and tireless efforts. Christ, indeed, saves the sinner, but once saved it is up to him to keep himself saved.

Over against such false conceptions we emphatically affirm, on the basis of the clear teaching of God's Word, that

It is Possible for the Believer To Be Kept.

Yes, it is even a sure possibility. The believer's prospect is to be kept, not to fall away. This sure possibility of his continuance in salvation rests

1. *On the believer's position and standing in Christ*, that is, on what the saved sinner is in God's sight as He sees him in the righteousness of His Son. Nowhere in the Bible is the believer's standing in Christ stated more clearly than in the fifth chapter of Romans, particularly the first 11 verses.

Here Paul is confronted with the question: "Is such a way really safe? Will it hold?" The Apostle answers by pointing to what the believer has positionally in Christ. "Being therefore justified (accounted, declared, regarded righteous) by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (Rom. 5:1,2). He has *peace* with God. Hostilities have ceased, followed by a state of peace. God and the justified

sinner are reconciled. Is not that way safe on which the sinner is at peace with God? But he also has *access* to God. Through Christ he has a free, open, unbarred way to the Father. Not even his sins are a separating barrier, for they are under the Blood. Surely such a way of salvation that gives the sinner undisputed access to God will hold.

But a standing in Christ which secures peace with God for the believer and provides an unhindered access to the throne of Grace, must of necessity argue for the possibility and certainty of safekeeping in Christ. And that is precisely Paul's conclusion. From the believer's position of Divine favor in Christ he arrives at sure possibility of his continuance and preservation in the faith. His argument in 5:6-11 is invincible. The following is an attempt at a summary statement of it: If while yet weak, ungodly, lost sinners and enemies we were saved by Christ's death, how much more now that we are justified and reconciled shall we be kept saved by Christ's life as He continually pleads His finished work on our behalf at the Throne.

Our secure position, then, in Christ argues for the sure possibility of our continuance in Him. But we also see the possibility of the believer's safekeeping in

2. *The non-imputation of sin* to those who are in Christ. "Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity," says the Psalmist (32:20). But is there any one to whom God does not reckon sin, whom He regards sinless? Yes, every one who is saved. The moment a sinner believes in Christ unto salvation, be he even the worst sinner on the face of the earth, that same instant God ceases to reckon sin unto him. And not only then but every subsequent moment of his life in Christ does God regard him and deal with him as though he had no sin.

From this it follows that the believer's continuance in Christ is not prevented by his failures and sins, nor is it conditioned upon the absence of sin from his life. If safekeeping were possible to the believer only when he is free from all sin, then he would never be kept. It is not sinlessness but non-imputation of sin that assures the possibility of being kept saved. Finally this possibility is seen in

3. *The safekeeping power of God*, by which alone the believer is kept. It is because Christians falsely believe they are to keep themselves in the faith, they live in constant dread of falling away. But safekeeping is no more their task than was salvation. The One who saved them must also keep them. They have no more power of their own to continue in salvation than they had to save themselves. It is by the *power of God* they are kept.

God's power to keep is stated in the plainest language in the Bible. For want of space we can quote only one or two. In John 10:27-29, Jesus says: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father who hath given them unto Me, is greater than all: and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." In God's keeping His children are secure. No power in heaven or on earth can take them out of His hands. He is willing and able to keep those who are in Christ, "who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Pet. 1:3).

Because of his secure position in Christ, because sin is not reckoned unto him when in Christ, and because of the omnipotent power of God to keep him, the believer can be sure of the possibility and prospect of being kept in the faith. This is the true and Scriptural eternal security.

—L.B.I. Tract

"The believer's prospect is to be kept, not to fall away."

editorials

WHAT THEY DID

This editorial could be placed in the category, 'What We Wouldn't Have Known Unless We Had Read It In a *Folkebladet* Magazine from 1923.'

In perusing through the old we discovered that there was a time when, in the Lutheran Free Church, the Board of Home Missions held its meetings out in the congregations upon invitation. The plan was this. All board members would assemble at the designated place. For two or three days they would hold their board meeting in the mornings and afternoons. In the evenings they would take part in a service in one of the churches in the parish (if it were a multiple one) and on Sunday in each congregation. If there were more men available than churches, a near-by parish might also be involved on Sunday.

Naturally, offerings for Home Missions were given at these various services and as much as possible of that went directly to the Home Mission work (that is, expenses were kept to a minimum).

That was a simpler time than now. Even so there was some criticism of moving a number of people over some distance for these meetings, although the costs were small in comparison to today.

But what a stimulus such a system must have been to the local parish which hosted these meetings. They became acquainted with the board members. Meetings of inspiration and blessing were held in the churches. The Board members had time to discuss in depth the work of missions in their day-long meetings.

While the local congregation is the church in its basic form, moving the Home Mission Board meetings to various places was a bringing of the church to the people, too. Anyway, we thought you'd be interested in what was done in one church body, at least, for a time.

INTER-CONGREGATIONAL FELLOWSHIP

Principles Nos. 7 and 8 of the *Guiding Principles* of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations read thusly: "A free congregation gladly accepts the mutual assistance which congregations can give one another in the work for the advancement of the Kingdom of God" (No. 7). "Such assistance consists partly in the mutual sharings of spiritual gifts among the congregations through conferences, exchange visits, lay activities, etc., whereby congregations are mutually edified, and partly in the voluntary and Spirit-prompted cooperation of congregations for the accomplishing of such tasks as exceed the ability of the individual congregation" (No. 8).

It is to the first part of Principle No. 8 that we would like to write at this time, the interchange among congregations for mutual edification. Is there much of that being done at the present time? There are some Luther League Family Night exchange programs. Occasionally a

choir from one congregation will give a concert or cantata at another. But likely there isn't much inter-congregational fellowship taking place.

May we encourage more of that sort of thing where distances permit. Some places they don't. Let's have more of this meeting together about spiritual things. Sometimes even in multiple parishes the congregations have little to do with one another, their only common bond being that they are served by the same pastor.

In older days (this is well before the merger) there were district or circuit meetings. These were several days in duration. People gathered at the host church for fellowship. The district pastors would give presentations on a central theme and text. The meetings were, in effect, district Bible conferences. Perhaps they were held in both the spring and in the fall. Naturally, the church where the meetings were held received the greatest benefit, but the conventions were passed around and all eventually felt the impact of them. In some districts Luther League (Young People's Societies) conventions were also held, another opportunity for fellowship across congregational lines, and these would last for two or three days. The format would be somewhat the same, although young people were more involved in these.

In more recent times, but also predating the merger of 1963, some of us knew the joint Women's Missionary Federation and Stewardship meetings which were held each fall on a district basis. The WMF session might be in the morning, the stewardship one in the afternoon, or vice versa. WMF meetings are held regularly in the districts now. But when a stewardship meeting was held it brought out the men, too. The ladies usually took in the stewardship session also and a good attendance was thus insured for that meeting.

We realize that fellowship is offered through Bible Camp work, the WMF, Luther League Federation, retreats, etc. But are there other things that can be done to provide fellowship between and among AFLC congregations, where distance permits? The simplest and easiest way is through Luther League Family Night exchange visits. Let's promote them.

And in the multiple parish, be sure to have one Sunday in the year as a parish Sunday where the congregations get together for the worship service. This will build a better relationship and help people to see that they are together in the Lord's work.

The purpose of it all is mutual edification, the building up in the Christian faith. We have been neglecting this aspect of our *Guiding Principles*. We are losers because of it.

LENGTH OF PASTORATES

It is long since we have had an article from friend Pastor Howard Kuhnle of Buffalo, N.Y. Now he has sent us one on the length of pastorates which you will find in this issue. Unsolicited, the article deals with a subject we all think about sometimes. What Pastor

◇

world mission news

from our Brazil field . . .

Dia Das Mães (Mother's Day)

That special day which is kept throughout the world. A day that brings pleasant memories to the minds of children and adults alike.

Mother's Day 1983 was celebrated in our Poema church with recitations and songs in honor of the mothers. At the close of the services the mothers were called to the front of the church to receive a remembrance of the day.

After the service we took a picture of them. Two had already left to begin their long walk home. There were 17 mothers present and only one is not a member of the church.

Before receiving their presents we had a short interview to certify some facts about them. The mother with the most children, 12, is Dona Pedrinha. The oldest mother, Dona Percilla, is 63. The youngest mother, Dona Dircy, is 23.

To have so many mothers probably is a record for this church which will stand as three mothers will be moving with their families from the community this year.

We thank God for each one and ask your prayers for them, that they might be faithful in diligently teaching their children the ways of the Lord.

Pastor George Knapp

Abels return to begin new work

The David Abel family (missionaries) who have been home on furlough in the U.S.A. since the first of April returned to Brazil in September.

The Abels left from Cleveland, Ohio, Mrs. Abel's parental home, on September 14, arriving in Curitiba, Brazil, via Miami and Rio de Janeiro.

After a short time in Campo Mourao, the Abels will be moving to the city of Vitoria, in the State of Espirito Santo, located along the Atlantic coast, northeast of our present field of work in Brazil.

In January of this year representatives of a number of Lutheran families from Vitoria attended the annual Brazil AFLC Conference. They desired to learn of the ministry and doctrinal stance of our Brazil AFLC.

Since that time, a formal request to affiliate and be served by the Brazil AFLC has been received and acted upon. The national church and missionary field conference have assigned Pastor David Able to take up this work upon his return to Brazil.

This is the first time that our Brazil work has been approached in this manner.

Pray for these believers who have separated themselves from their Ger-

man Lutheran Church for doctrinal reasons and desire to live and work for the Lord as co-workers in the Brazil AFLC.

Pray for the David Abel family as they take up this new work. The Abels temporary address until the first of the year:

Rua Rui Barbosa No. 19
Campo Grande, Cariacica
29154 Vitoria, Espirito Santo
Brazil

Year begins at AFLC schools



Lori Krieger, Brazil. Story and more photos on p. 12.

The first chapel service.

EDITORIAL . . .

Kuhnle has written will raise a lot of the issues involved and stimulate your thinking.

From our own observation, it would seem that there have been more pastorates too short than too long. There is often the temptation early on in a pastorate to think that maybe the grass is greener somewhere else than where one is. But generally it is good if a pastor can resist that feeling, devote himself even more earnestly to the task at hand and truly enter into the life of the people he has been called to serve.

But read Pastor Kuhnle's article for food for thought. We are glad he is not dogmatic in what he presents.



CAMPUS NEWS

Summer Institute of Theology

By Emerson Anderson, Lay Pastor
Cleveland, Ohio

For two weeks in mid-summer a number of men met at the Association Free Lutheran Seminary to participate in the annual Summer Institute of Theology. From July 25 through August 5, laymen, lay pastors and pastors availed themselves of the opportunity for learning, encouragement and growth toward continued spiritual ministry in the work of the Lord's Church. Each morning we assembled at 7:40 a.m. for a short devotion and a time of prayer. The first class began at 7:55 a.m., and such study went on until noon. Our afternoon (and sometimes our evening) hours were spent in relevant research in the seminary library with preliminary preparations for completing written assignments. For some, completion of some of the written assignments was also accomplished. Our written assignments must be completed and submitted for grading by next February first.

Pastor Amos Dyrud, Instructor and former Dean of the Seminary, taught a course in the book of Joshua. Here we learned many practical lessons for the Christian life and discovered this book is much like Paul's Ephesian letter, with its encouragements to enter into the promised land of spiritual blessing found in Christ. Our assignment for this course is to write an outline of the book which

Craig Gray, Spicer, Minn. and Paul Bredfeldt, Dexter, Minn.

may be used as a guide for conducting a public Bible study.

Dr. Merton Strommen, Executive Director of Search Institute, Minneapolis, Minnesota, conducted a seminar involving 15 classroom hours with regard to youth and youth ministry in the church. Here we learned of the "five cries of youth," and how we may design our youth ministry to better meet the needs which are revealed through these cries. We were surprised to learn of the great lack of meaningful communication between many parents and their children. There is an urgent need to help many church parents and children to learn to communicate the innermost thoughts of their hearts. Oftentimes there is serious misunderstanding of the child's feelings about his parents and the parents' feelings about their child. Our assignment for this course is to read two designated books regarding youth and youth ministry in the Church and to prepare a study on meeting the needs of youth through the local church.

Pastor Philip Haugen, instructor at our seminary, taught a course in Paul's Letter to the Colossians. His method was to spend considerable time in the grammatical construction of certain key passages and regarding the meaning of certain key words. This was to teach us the value of

serious exegetical work in Biblical interpretation. Our assignment is to do exegetical work on Colossians 2:16-17, with special attention to Paul's reference to Sabbath-keeping.

Pastor Robert Lee, also of our seminary teaching staff, taught a course in the history of revivals in the Church. This course gave us a view of revivals from the infancy of the Church to the present time. It was a source of encouragement to be reminded that revivals have always taken place in times when moral and spiritual degeneracy were prevalent. Therefore, we can pray and labor and hope for revival in our day. We can believe that God hears our prayer and sees our concern, and we may hope for true awakening and revival. Our assignment is to read a prescribed book on dynamics in spiritual life and to prepare a paper on some person or aspect of revival in Church history.

Students and their families were treated to a special cook-out one evening at the home of President and Mrs. R. Snipstead. This took place on the final evening of our time at school. Surely God is good to us and we students wish to say "thanks" to all who labored so faithfully to make our time at school profitable and pleasant. We look forward to Summer Institute 1984. Now let us who were students be diligent not to lose the things we have learned. Let us use the knowledge and skills imparted to us by putting them to practical use as we continue to minister in Jesus' Name.



1983 Summer Institute.

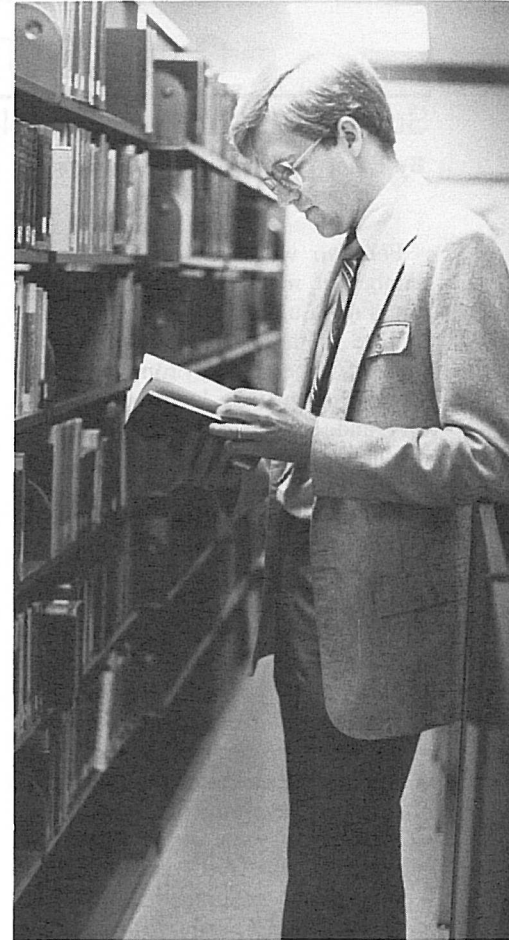


Ellen Quanbeck, McVille, N. Dak. and Sherrie Melvie, Viking, Minn.

The 1983-84 school year began on Sept. 12. Eighty-nine students registered for AFLBS classes. Twenty-two students are attending AFLTS which began Sept. 7. Three AFLBS students are from Norway and one from Brazil.

Pastor Laurel Udden is the new faculty member. He replaces Pastor Rao Dasari who left for his new position in India on Sept. 15, under the World Mission department.

Photos by S. Hjermstad



Mr. Joel Rolf, senior seminarian.

fellowship corner

The King is coming

I'd like to share with you something about what I believe to be another of our Spirit-led district WMF rallies, at Grafton, N. Dak., last spring.

As soon as the date was set I started planning on going. I was thrilled to hear that our missionaries, Janet and David Abel, would be here in the States in time for this rally. Then it sounded like they wouldn't be there to share about their work with us. I started losing interest. I knew I didn't have a ride and I couldn't see my dear husband hanging around a strange town all day.

Then a dear, dear friend mentioned she would like to go and she could drive. Well, the Lord provided an auction sale right there in Grafton. That took care of my ride as husband

Arnold enjoys visiting these sales. So he said that he would take both of us. Still I wasn't thrilled to go, but my godly husband, thank God for him, said, "You must go."

We got to Grafton real early and found the church. The first thing I did was look at the program for the day. My dear Abels were listed and I said a big thank you to God and to Arnold. Then the ladies were busy putting tulips on the tables and other places. Do you know that touched my heart because there is only one bloom on a tulip. When one is picked the garden misses that beauty because that's it until the next spring. So I saw the unselfishness in this blessing.

I felt so free to enjoy everything. I believe this is one of the blessings of our district rallies. Then our decorations were all geared to "I am coming soon" (Rev. 22:20). I believe that's the best news for the day, any

day. The beautiful and majestic music from organ and piano really prepared me for the God-given messages from Pastor Terry Olson and the Abels. Then when the Abels sang "It is Well With My Soul" I realized the Lord was telling me it was well with my soul.

And I came home here to Hatton more determined to serve the Lord better and to get back to writing my representatives on our mission field, and to stop complaining about the cost of postage.

Thank God for this correction in my Christian life. I felt like rising right through the church and on to heaven when Pastor and Mrs. Rodger Olson sang "The King is Coming." Praise God, He is, and I pray we'll all be ready as we were so beautifully told in Word and song at our rally.

Mrs. Arnold Jodock
Hatton, N. Dak.

To Whom Shall We go?

**"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, 'Will ye also go away?'
Then Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go?
Thou hast the words of eternal life.' " John 6:67, 68**

We long for more light and more wisdom,
But, Master, to whom shall we go?
Shall we seek the worn gods of the pagans,
Who see not and hear not, nor know?
The spoil of the poor in their houses
Grows rusty with blood and with tears,
And their chambers of pitiless silence
Are built on the wrongs of the years.

Shall we eat of the new tree of knowledge,
"No evil, no pain; all is good;
No sin and no Saviour for sinners,
No need of the Cross and the Blood"?
Nay—nay; the old serpent, beguiling,
Tells over once more the old lie;
"Eat of this, and your eyes shall be opened;
As gods ye shall live and not die."

Shall we turn to diviners and spirits,
To wizards that mutter and peep,
Whose voices come out of the darkness,
Whose whispers rise up from the deep?
They prate of the past and the future;
They will call back our dead with a word;
But under their boasts and their babblings
The laughter of demons is heard.

Oh, where in their lies is their knowledge?
Oh, where in their darkness is light?
Shall the blind lead the blind into safety,
And both be not lost in the night?
They have taken the bread from the hungry;
They have bound up the wounded for gain;
They have stolen away the old landmarks;
Their help and their helpers are vain.

They tear the old faith into fragments,
And build, on the truth they deny,
Strange towers of fancy and fable,
And deem they can mount to the sky.
Away with "New Thought" and "New
Knowledge"

That voice the old lies of the past,
That only perplex and bewilder,
To leave us in doubt at the last.

To Thee, the Life-bringer, Life-giver;
To Thee, the one Truth, the one Way;
The one Light that lightens our darkness,
The one God who hears when we pray;
Who looseth the chains of the captives,
And setteth the prisoners free;
O Jesus, Thou Son of the Father,
To whom shall we go but to Thee?

—Annie Johnson Flint

Second annual Wilderness Camp held

The second annual Wilderness Camp was held July 29-31. It was conducted at the AFLC property north of Pelican Rapids, Minn.

Our camp is the youngest in the Association, but we probably had the oldest camper of all this year, Rev. Trygve F. Dahle, 91, of Spicer, Minn. We were encouraged by the presence of Pastor Dahle and his wife Anna. They were guests of the Lawrence Dahlgrens and attended every service.

Pastor and Mrs. (Marion) Gordon Grage, Brandon, Minn., spent some of their vacation getting ready for the camp by making tables, clearing brush, mowing grass, etc. Three outdoor toilets were built and placed on the grounds earlier by volunteer labor. Tom Hill, Cloquet, Minn., was our caretaker and lived in a trailer house on the property.

Our opening service was Friday evening. Pastor Grage, as dean, led every service and the Gospel Messengers from Brandon sang several selections at the opening service.

Pastor Dennis Gray was our evening speaker and also preached on Sunday morning. Friday night he talked about Matthew 18:3 and conversion. We cannot depend on our baptism or confirmation, he said. We are each called personally. The Holy Spirit uses His Word in such a way that we will be sorrowful for sin and, as we completely rely on Him, we receive a new heart. The evidence of our faith, then, is that we have a desire to obey and read His Word. We feel comfortable with Christians and yearn to lead others to Christ.

Pastor Robert Lewis, Abercrombie, N. Dak., led us through the Book of Jude on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Jude was written at a time when apostasy was growing in the church. Cults were increasing. Religions were placing man in the center of things instead of God, just like in our day. We need to contend for the faith. We need to agonize over a specific individual. God must deal with sin in one of two ways, Pastor Lewis declared: forgive and forget the sin or judge it.

Early Saturday morning some of our campers were dampened by the rainfall.

Saturday afternoon was spent relaxing, visiting, swimming and resting.

That evening Pastor Gray spoke on Acts 13:38, 39. These verses deal with the forgiveness of our sins and also the assurance of forgiveness. On Sunday morning we heard from Ephesians 2:1-7, the past, present and future life of every Christian.

Seventy-eight campers were registered this year from Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. Please feel free to come next year and join in the fellowship. This property was dedicated to the glory of God last year. God's Spirit was very evident as the Word was spoken and through the special music at each service. If you don't have a camper or a tent and cannot stay on the grounds, come for part of the time and join the fellowship.

Mr. George Hartman of Dalton, Minn., served as camp manager.

—Mrs. George Hartman

New Mundfrom book out

Rev. Gerald F. Mundfrom's new book, *The Depressed Christian*, is ready for distribution. The retail price is \$3.95 plus postage. It is orange in color and has about 110 pages.

The purpose of this book is to help the discouraged, depressed Christian to understand his depression and to give him new hope and encouragement in continuing on in the Christian warfare.

The book was printed by Minnesota Correctional Industries at the Lino Lakes minimum security facility. It may be ordered from:

Gerald F. Mundfrom Printing Fund
Route 1, Box 503
Osceola, Wisconsin 54020

In Memoriam

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

MINNESOTA

Newfolden

Harold R. Haaseth, 71, Sept. 1, Westaker

The North Central WMF rally will be on Saturday, October 8, at Trinity Free Lutheran Church, Shevlin. Pastor and Mrs. Jay Erickson, Fosston, will be the speakers. Registration and coffee begin at 9:30 a.m..

Prosperous Days

The chief enemies of man are not so much his evil but his prosperous days, when the purifying fires of affliction are not burning and the unbridled impulses of nature spread more easily than at other times. It is necessary to wage war on this army of desires "not only at certain times but at all times," in fullest freedom, it is true, but also with the most intense zeal. The same emphasis must be laid on both sides.

Adolf Koberle, *The Quest for Holiness*
Augsburg Publishing House.

news of the churches

from here and there

Stacy, Minn.—The "Nehemiah Builders" enjoyed a camping trip to Taylors Falls, Minn., Sept. 2-4. Parents were welcome, too.

Minneapolis, Minn.—Renee Regnier and husband Phil are the parents of a daughter, Michelle Christine, born August 22. Renee is the executive secretary of the AFLC Department of Parish Education. The family belongs to Rosedale Lutheran Church. Congratulations!

Faith Lutheran Church is buying new folding chairs for its basement fellowship hall. A matching grant from Lutheran Brotherhood is being sought.

Dalton, Minn.—Like in other churches, confirmation instruction is beginning again in the Dalton parish. Classes are being held on Wednesdays at 4:30 (junior) and 5:30 (senior).

Roseau, Minn.—A couples only potluck supper was held at the Nikunen cabin on Springsteel Island, Lake of the Woods, on Sept. 10. This was for Roseau Lutheran.

Badger, Minn.—Released-time classes for the parish will be held at Badger Creek Lutheran Church with Oiland congregation providing the teachers this year.

Ferndale, Wash.—Kaye Pederson ran a half marathon (13.1 miles) on August 20. She took second place in her division. Kaye is from Triumph Lutheran Church.

Drummond, Wis.—The latest Corrie ten Boom film, "Jesus is Victor," was shown at the parish family night on Sept. 18.

Greenbush, Minn.—Hegland Lutheran Church, Strandquist, Minn., presented the program at family night at Bethlehem Lutheran Church on Sept. 4.

Tioga, N. Dak.—There is a "Gourmet Fellowship" in Zion Lutheran Church. The first meeting this fall was held on Sept. 25 and began with a gourmet meal. The group is studying the book *Pillars of Marriage*.

Some minor re-modeling is being done on the Youth Center. It will be carpeted and some partitions are being put in to make additional Sunday School and youth study rooms.

Minnewaukan, N. Dak.—Trinity Lutheran Congregation has voted to support Jonathan Maraj, a missionary in India.

A number of Trinity's members won contests in the Minnewaukan centennial celebration in July.

Devils Lake, N. Dak.—An AFLC congregation has been organized in Devils Lake. It will be called Christ Lutheran. Plans are to purchase the former Seventh Day Adventist Church at 2nd St. and 7th Ave. The Board of Home Missions is helping the new congregation by sending out a seminarian for Sunday services two or three times a month. Rev. Jerome Nikunen, Minnewaukan, will conduct services on the other Sundays.

Greenbush, Minn.—United Lutheran Church had ten graduating seniors this past spring. They all took part in the baccalaureate service at their church on Sunday, May 15.

The members of the fourth grade in Sunday School were given Bibles at the close of the term in May. On the last day of Sunday School the children and their teachers released balloons with names and Bible verses attached.

with our evangelist-youth worker

Where men still sin there is the need of an evangelist. Where Christians still long for the "prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus," there is the need for an evangelist. Support our evangelist, Rev. Kenneth Pentti, in his ministry in these coming weeks.

Leeds, N. Dak.

Lebanon Lutheran Church

Oct. 5-9

LeRoy Flickinger, pastor

Minneapolis, Minn.

Morgan Avenue Lutheran Church

Oct. 14-16

Yeddo Gottel, pastor

Bagley, Minn.

Grace Lutheran Church

Oct. 23-27

Mauritz Lundeen, pastor

Dalton, Minn.

Dalton Parish

Oct. 30-Nov. 3

Merle Fagerberg, lay pastor

Battle Lake, Minn.

Faith Haven Bible Camp

Nov. 4-5

Youth Retreat

Wadena, Minn.

Zion Lutheran Church

Nov. 6-9

Fred H. Carlson, pastor

Personalities

Please note the new addresses for the following persons:

Rev. and Mrs. Gary Skramstad
1439 E. 80th St.
Bloomington, Minn. 55420

Rev. and Mrs. Tony Stockman
2427 Selmser Ave.
Cloquet, Minn. 55720

Rev. and Mrs. David Molstre
1077-4th Ave. E.
Dickinson, N. Dak. 58601

Rev. Stockman is now assistant pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Cloquet. He was recently ordained.



The graduates and Pastor Burton Rygh.

"Life is suffering—escape it," says Buddhism.
"Life brings suffering—use it," says Jesus.

Light on the Way Somebody's Knocking

"Behold I stand at the door and knock" (Revelation 3:20).

It is Jesus your Savior who stands at the door of your heart and knocks. For He desires to enter your heart not for a brief visit only, but to abide there, so that He may give you what you need for time and for eternity. That is His reason for knocking at the door of your heart.

He is not like us. We are always in such haste. When we knock at the door once or twice and no one opens, we hasten away. But Jesus "stands" at the door and continues to knock, as if He were the one who needed us, when indeed it is we who need Him. And still He has stood there so long without gaining entrance.

Surely there have been moments in your life, serious moments, when you were aware of His knocking at the door of your heart. Sometimes He knocks violently, at other times so gently that you scarcely notice it. He has many ways and means.

But always He desires you to open the door of your heart so that He may enter in. "How blest the day, my soul how blest? When Jesus comes to be thy guest!" Yet He stands at the door and knocks. He has come as far as He can until you permit Him to enter. You must insert the key of your will into the lock and open. Then He will joyfully enter your heart with abundant joy, grace and peace.

Have you opened for Him, my friend?

"But," I hear someone say, "does Jesus really want to enter and dwell in my heart?" Isn't that a foolish question? For why does Jesus knock at the door if He does not wish to enter? "Yes, but my heart is so full of sin," you say. That is precisely the reason why He wants to enter—to help you to conquer sin, and to purify your heart so that it may be a temple fit for Him to dwell in.

Oh, God be praised that Jesus will enter my heart!

"My heart Thou must have solely,
My Savior and my God.

Come, Jesus, take it wholly,
And make it Thine abode!"

—Søren Dahl
(Courtesy, Tract Mission)

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Minneapolis, Minn. 55441

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paid at Minneapolis, Minn.

Jesus, My Truth, My Way

Jesus, my Truth, my Way,
My sure, unerring Light,
On Thee my feeble soul I
stay
Which Thou wilt lead
aright.

My Wisdom and my Guide,
My Counsellor Thou art:
O let me never leave Thy
side,
Nor from Thy paths depart.

Thou seest my feebleness;
Jesus, be Thou my Power,
My help and Refuge in dis-
tress,
My Fortress and my Tower.

Myself I cannot save,
Myself I cannot keep;
But strength in Thee I surely
have,
Whose eyelids never sleep.

My soul to Thee alone
Now therefore I commend:
Thou, Jesus, having loved
Thine own
Wilt love them to the end!

Dr. Gauntlett
(The Church and
Sunday School Hymnal)



Martin Luther

**Martin Luther:
500 years**

Luther's experience . . .

In the monastery Luther tried earnestly to find peace of heart through various forms of self-discipline. He fasted, he prayed, he scourged himself, he read the Scriptures, he studied and pondered. But peace did not come. At last, acting upon the advice of an old spiritual counsellor, he laid hold on the ancient word, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." Then, little by little, through a deeper study of the Word, he was led

into an understanding of what it is to "live by faith." With that clarified, he had the basis upon which to wage his life-long struggle for the great truth that salvation does not come by human works, but by faith alone. The flame of living faith burned in his soul, enabling him by grace to turn the very tides of history and lead millions back to God.

—Bernhard Christensen
Fire Upon the Earth