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Vol. 1

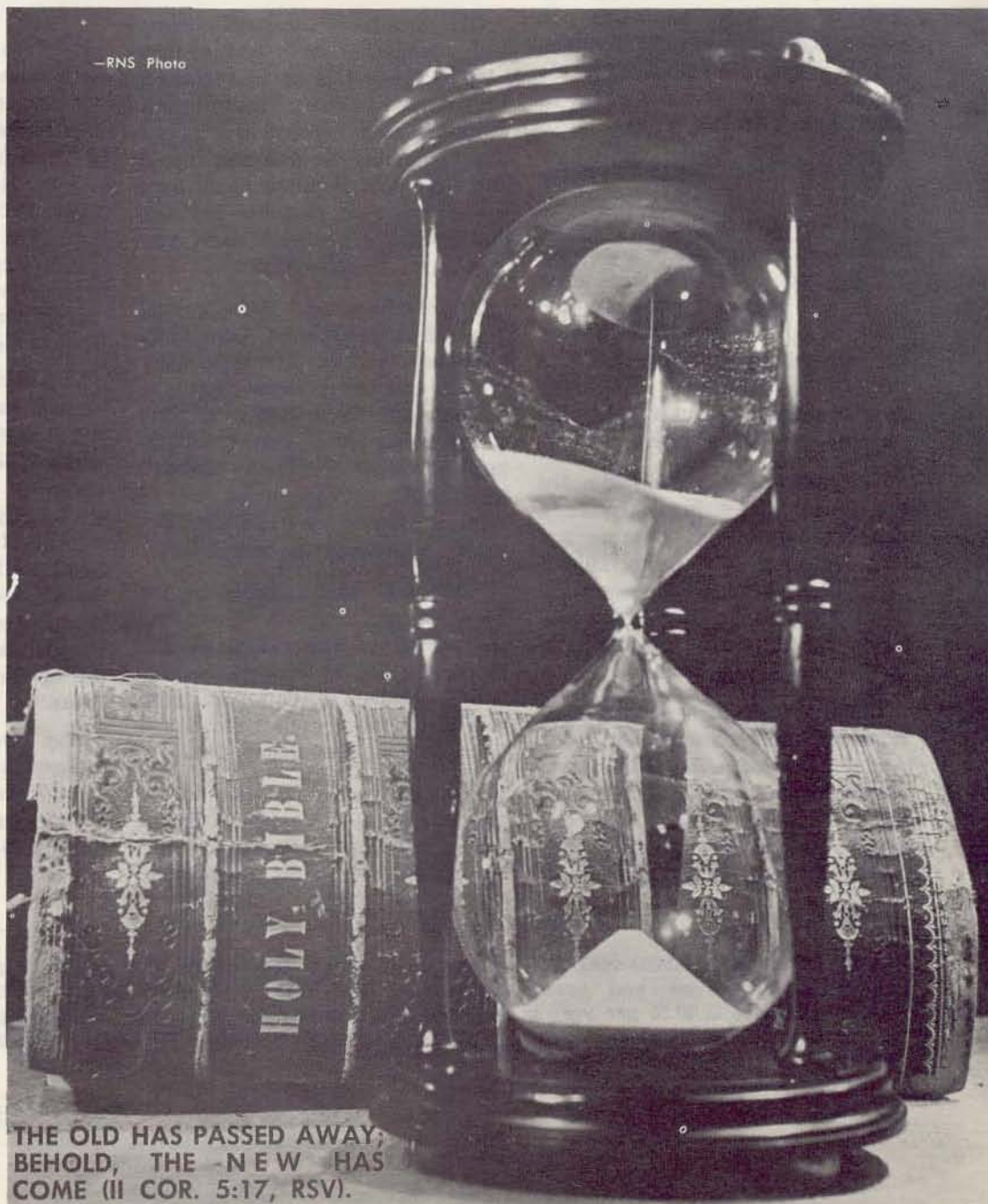
December 31, 1963

No. 24

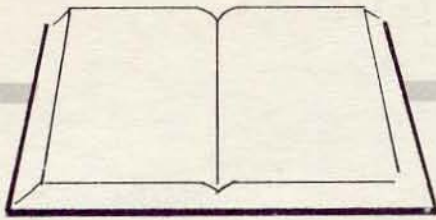
LUTHERAN

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—RNS Photo



THE OLD HAS PASSED AWAY;
BEHOLD, THE NEW HAS
COME (II COR. 5:17, RSV).



According to the Word

THE POWER AND THE GLORY

"I pray that your inward eyes may be illumined, so that you may know what is the hope to which he calls you, what the wealth and glory of the share he offers you among his people in their heritage, and how vast the resources of his power open to us who trust in him" (Eph. 1:18, 19, NEB).

Those are great words. The hope, the wealth, the glory, the resources of power—all there to be seen, to be claimed in an ever greater way by the people of God. Let those of us who say that we know the Lord lift up our eyes from looking for lost nickels on the ground to the face of Him who can make us more than conquerors in this life and give us heaven, too.

The pastor's young son had heard the layman play his harp at a church program one evening and sing the song, "I'm Going Higher Some Day." When they were going home that night the little boy asked his father, "How high is Mr. _____ going?"

Children ask some hard questions of their parents, I'm told. And I don't know how the father answered this one. But the Russian cosmonauts and the American astronauts haven't sheared any corner off the many mansions of

God. Scientists have recently admitted that the universe is a good deal bigger than they had supposed before. No, we don't need to fear that even Venus probes are going to shatter our belief in God's tomorrow.

Old men have dreamed dreams and young men have had visions of a glory that is to be. Strange, isn't it, how in every human breast there lies the hope that a better day is coming beyond this world and life? And if not a hope, then a sneaking fear that life goes on beyond the grave and one's sins will yet catch up to him?

Yes, the Bible tells of the blessed hope of the people of God. Only dimly is the glory of that land revealed, but the promise that sin, sickness and death shall be missing is alone very good news. It will be good to throw off forever the evil inclination which causes us so often to choose less than the best, to say nothing of the worst.

Who is it who calls us to this hope? It is the Lord Jesus. And the means of His calling is His blood, His life, as we note in verse 7 of Ephesians 1. Our part is to receive, to accept, to believe. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ!

But now, in my final devotional article for the time being, let us also think of the here and now. For we are here in the plan of God

and it may be needful that we remain for some time yet. This time must be gainfully used, for it is still the season of harvest. We must be reminded, too, that it is possible to err in the sense of becoming so heavenly-minded that one is no earthly good.

Between that extreme and being earth-bound so that heaven's citizenship is lost is the happy medium for which we should strive. It is to be in the world, but not of it; possessing some of the world's goods, yet not being possessed by them. For this life the resources of Christ's power are available. It is power which enables the Christian to live as a light which brings glory to the Father.

We often hear that people live beyond their income in America and Canada. How few of us who follow Jesus have used more than a little of the resources He places at our disposal. And our lives and the life of the Church are an eloquent testimony to that fact. May we set forth on a spiritual quest that will show more of Paul's determination to seize "the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

And now, I conclude my series of meditations through the past year. If they have been of help to anyone, I am well repaid. The glory belongs to God.

—Raynard Huglen

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR is published bi-weekly (except the first issue of August) by an association of Lutheran congregations and interested friends. Rev. Raynard Huglen, Roslyn, South Dakota, is the editor. Subscription price is \$2.50 per year in advance. Subscriptions should be sent to **THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR**, Box 652, Grafton, North Dakota. Third-class postage paid at Minneapolis, Minnesota. Publication office: 6820 Auto Club Road, Minneapolis, Minn. 55431.

Information on the Valley City Situation

The following statement appeared in the Valley City TIMES-RECORD and is reprinted here with two minor changes.

SINCE the pro-merger faction of the First Lutheran Church has already given a lengthy explanation of its view of the merger problem in the *Times-Record*, we on the other side feel it is necessary that we also give folks in our community our viewpoint.

It's about 14 years now since the Lutheran Free Church of America began talking seriously about merger with other Lutherans. Our congregation has been associated with that body. In about the year 1954 the proposal was made to unite with three synods that formed the American Lutheran Church. Much space was given to discussions of the merger question in the official paper of the LFC through the years following, and numerous debates and speeches were heard on the subject at the annual conferences and district gatherings of the church. We also had our discussions locally from time to time.

Since the Lutheran Free Church was an association of independent Lutheran congregations and not an incorporated synod, it was necessary to refer the matter of merger to each individual congregation for its decision. Three times such "Referendums" were conducted throughout the congregations of the LFC. The two first failed to carry by the prescribed margin, but the third referendum carried by a two-thirds majority vote.

It must be added that even in the third referendum only 44 percent of the congregations actually voted by a two-thirds majority for merger, but because the larger congregations were given as many as a ten-vote count in the election and the smallest congregations as few as a one-vote count, the two-thirds majority was reached. Then a vote was taken at the June 1962 confer-

ence of the LFC and two-thirds of the delegates voted in favor of approving the merger agreements. However, it was stipulated at the conference that congregations not wanting to merge could still make their individual decisions and report to the church headquarters. They were assured that their decisions would be respected. After all, the conferences of the LFC had power only to recommend actions to the congregations; they could not legislate for them.

First Lutheran congregation of Valley City participated in the three before-mentioned referendums and consistently rejected the proposal to negotiate merger. Then to determine what our congregation should do relative to the problem after the June 1962 LFC conference had made its decision, a special "Information Meeting" was held July 31. At that time Dr. Stensvaag, who was then President of the LFC, and Rev. John Strand spoke on the issue and answered questions. Thereafter on September 10, 1962, a vote was taken on the question of whether or not First Lutheran Church should merge with the American Lutheran Church. The results of that election were 99 votes against merger and 91 for merger. That assembly voted at the same meeting, just prior to the merger vote, to settle the merger question by a simple majority margin.

But the question was not settled because the President of the LFC (at that time) certified First Lutheran congregation into the American Lutheran Church over and in spite of the congregation's decision. The result of that action has left the question unanswered in the minds of many whether First Lutheran congregation is in the ALC or not.

In order that folks in our community might draw their own conclusions as to the power of self-government of our congregation, we submit below a copy of the Fundamental Principles of the Lutheran Free Church. These, together with "Rules for Work," a three-page document, constitute the simple guiding rules under which the LFC has operated for more than 65 years in our country. Note especially numbers 5, 10, and 11. First Lutheran Church of Valley City has never voted to accept the "constitution" of the American Lutheran Church. That's a 192-page document. To accept it would require a basic change in the constitution of our local congregation, and that would take time as well as votes.

Several of the news reports have referred to the vote on discharging the pastor of First Lutheran Church on May 13, 1963, as practically unanimous. However, the fact that nearly all the anti-merger folks refused to vote has not been mentioned. Neither has the fact been brought to light that many of those who did cast their votes were unqualified to vote.

The news stories we have been reading have noted that the vote was illegal due to the fact that the purpose of the meeting had not been announced. That is true but it had been announced to the pro-merger group. It has always been the procedure in First Lutheran to announce not only the time of the congregational business meeting, but also the purpose of it whenever a major or unusual issue was to be decided.

We want it clearly understood that the actions of the group opposed to merger are not set forth by a "leader" but endorsed by the entire anti-merger group.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

(Guiding Principles of the Lutheran Free Church)

1. According to the Word of God, the congregation is the right form of the Kingdom of God on earth.

2. The congregation consists of believers who use the means of grace and the spiritual gifts as directed by the Word of God, seek salvation and eternal blessedness for themselves and for their fellow men.

3. According to the New Testament, the congregation needs an external organization with membership roll, election of officers, stated times and places for its gatherings, and other similar provisions.

4. Members of the organized congregation are not, in every instance believers, and such members often derive false hope from their external connection with the congregation. It is therefore the sacred obligation of the congregation to purify itself by the quickening preaching of the Word of God, by earnest admonition and exhortation, and expelling the openly sinful and perverse.

5. The congregation directs its own affairs, subject to the authority of the Word and the Spirit of God, and acknowledges no other ecclesiastical authority or government above itself.

6. A free congregation esteems and cherishes all the spiritual gifts which the Lord gives for its edification, and seeks to stimulate and encourage their use.

7. A free congregation gladly accepts the mutual assistance which the congregations can give one another in the work for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

8. Such assistance consists partly in the mutual sharings of spiritual gifts among 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.

9. Among such tasks may be

mentioned specifically the training of pastors, distribution of Bibles and other Christian literature, home missions, foreign missions, Jewish missions, deaconess homes, children's homes, and other works of mercy.

10. Free congregations have no right to demand that other congregations shall submit to their opinion, will, judgment, or decision; therefore, domination by a majority of congregations over a minority is to be rejected.

11. Agencies found desirable for conducting the joint activities of congregations, such as conferences, committees, officers, etc., cannot in a Lutheran Free Church, impose any obligations or restrictions, exert any compulsions, or lay any burden upon the individual congregation, but have the right only to make recommendations to, and requests of, congregations and individuals.

12. Every free congregation, as well as every individual believer, is constrained by the Spirit of God and by the privileges of Christian love to do good and to work for the salvation of souls and the quickening of spiritual life, as far as its abilities and power permit. Such free spiritual activity is limited neither by parish nor by synodical bounds.

—Valley City Times-Record

Since there have been so many stories in various newspapers relating to the church troubles in Valley City, the editor of the *Ambassador* asked me if I would give my version of the things that have happened.

We were locked out of the church Sunday, August 18, and therefore had a service outside on the front steps and lawn. It was estimated that between 75 and 100 people were in attendance. Two men of the pro-merger faction had been seen changing the locks on the church doors a couple of days before. My wife and I had been away in Minnesota since the previous Sunday afternoon and had returned after dark the evening before the "lock-out" occurred.

Friends therefore came over after they saw lights in the parsonage and told us about the changed locks and about a brief notice that had appeared in the local newspaper stating that there would be no service at First Lutheran Sunday, the 18th of August. The church announcements I had mailed in early in the week had been intercepted and so excluded from the paper.

"Why did all this take place?" is a question that has been asked repeatedly since that fateful Sunday. We can answer that this move on the part of the pro-merger faction to lock the church doors was only one in a series of moves that it has made since September, 1962, when our congregation voted not to merge with the American Lutheran Church. The vote at time was a close one, 99 against merging and 91 for merging. However, let me add that just before voting on the actual merger issue, the congregation voted to abide by a simple majority vote. Also, prior to that election, the congregation had taken part in three church-wide referendums, but had never authorized by vote the LFC Union Committee to negotiate merger for them with other Lutheran bodies.

Nevertheless, in spite of these four decisions by the congregation the president of the LFC certified the congregation into the American Lutheran Church. After that move by the president, the congregation became more sharply divided than ever. Some believed that the president had authority to bypass the decisions of the congregation and some, including the pastor, believed he could not.

The pro-merger faction then began to initiate moves to discharge the pastor. They were informed that he had asked not to be certified as a pastor of the American Lutheran Church. On February 8, 1963, he received the following letter by certified mail signed by an attorney who had been engaged by the pro-merger faction:

"Dear Rev. Monseth:

"This is to advise you that pursuant to action duly taken by the

Board of Trustees of the First Lutheran Church of Valley City on Feb. 5, 1963, I have been requested as their attorney to notify you as follows: the said Board has decided and has instructed the Church Treasurer that commencing March 1, 1963, any salary or other emoluments heretofore paid or granted to you by said Church will be discontinued and that you are requested to vacate the parsonage now occupied by you by March 1, 1963. You are further notified that said Board has decided that you have no authority to install the officers and that installation is not necessary, but purely perfunctory.

"This action is being taken for the reason that you are not a certified pastor of the American Lutheran Church of which the First Lutheran Church is now a certified member and for various reasons which must be self-evident to you."

Signed by the attorney

Then on March 18, 1963, a statement signed by several members of the church council was delivered to the pastor which read as follows:

"It has come to the attention of the official church council of the First Lutheran Church of Valley City that you have attempted to call a meeting of the council for Tuesday evening, March 19, 1963, at 8 o'clock p.m. This is to advise you that the official council will not be present at the meeting for the following reasons:

1. We have been advised by our attorney that it would not be proper for us to be present at such a meeting in that no legal business can be transacted.
2. That we do not consider you as the official pastor of the First Lutheran Church of Valley City and that consequently you have no right to call such a meeting.
3. That you are not a certified pastor of the American Lutheran Church and consequently have no authority to act as such.
4. That you have requested that you not be certified as a pastor of the American Lutheran Church and have openly stated* that you will not preach in a

pulpit of such church.

5. That any legal business to be transacted will be carried on and performed by the official council at a meeting called by its vice-chairman and not by you.
6. We tentatively expect to ask Rev. Belgum to speak on the cause of Lutheran Welfare next Sunday.
7. On behalf of our entire congregation we sincerely request that you consider our welfare and leave our congregation so that we can work out our problems and again have peace and harmony."

*I have never stated that I would not preach in an American Lutheran Church.

We were aware that the moves made by the pro-merger faction were a direct violation of our church constitution as also our legal counsel assured us. I therefore ignored the threats and continued to serve.

Then came May 13, the day of the quarterly meeting of our congregation. I had announced it at two morning services as required by our constitution. An unusual number of people were gathered. The atmosphere was tense. After some of the routine business had been transacted I was asked by one of the pro-merger men to leave the meeting, explaining that they had something special to discuss. I stepped out. He then called for a vote to discharge the pastor. Those of the anti-merger group who were in attendance protested that such a vote would neither be proper nor legal because it had not been announced to the congregation previously. They therefore refused to vote. I was voted out. It has always been the practice of the congregation that when any extra-ordinary matter would be decided, that the purpose of the meeting as well as the time of it must be announced two Sundays prior to such a meeting.

Believing that the procedure was illegal and encouraged by the anti-merger group, I continued to serve and told the members I had no

intention of leaving the pulpit. But about 90 days after the May quarterly meeting the church door locks were changed. We were locked out.

The pastor of the Nazarene Church came over the afternoon after the "lock-out" and offered us the use of his church at a time when his congregation would not be using it. We accepted the offer and met there four Sunday mornings after which we were able to rent the City Hall. There we have been meeting since.

The Lord has been blessing us and we intend to continue working under the Guiding Principles of the Lutheran Free Church. We sincerely believe there is room for a free and Lutheran congregation here in Valley City. The Lord has preserved us from bitterness, and we are looking to Him to open doors as we move forward with Him.

Rev. F. B. Monseth

(The pro-merger section of First Lutheran Church has instituted action in the district court to oust Pastor Monseth from the church parsonage. No date for the hearing has been set. The anti-merger portion of First Lutheran Church has initiated a counter action to quiet title to the church property, that is, to determine ownership of the

same. In the meantime, the anti-merger portion of the congregation now uses a building on the edge of Valley City which better meets their needs.—Ed.)

NOTICE

As the Lord lays it upon your heart to share in our work, we invite you to send your contributions to

Treasurer
Lutheran Association
7013 Lee Valley Circle
Minneapolis 24, Minnesota
Please send all subscriptions to
The Lutheran Ambassador
Box 652, Grafton, N. Dak.



EDITORIALS

THE VALLEY CITY STORY

It has long been a truism that there are two sides to every story. And in life most of us try to concede that point even though when one is convinced of his own opinions and has no doubt of the rightness of his own position on a matter it is often not easy to understand a contrary view while at the same time wanting to grant the holder of an opposite conviction every right to differ.

Fortunately, in most of life's situations disputes are settled through democratic processes and the judgments arrived at are accepted. But occasionally the interpretations of rules and laws are so conflicting that an impasse results. Then those who hold contrary opinions plead with a third party for a verdict. Sometimes trusted lay advisors can mediate the question if neither party is willing to step aside. At other times the matter goes to a court of law. At this point, there is decided difference of opinion among Christian people as to whether matters ought to be pursued in the courts, but it is not our purpose to debate that point here now.

At Valley City such an impasse has developed. Neither side relishes the thought that the name of their beautiful city has become synonymous with church strife in our time. Vainly have they looked thus far to the court of Judge Gordon McRae of International Falls, Minn., for some indication to the solution of their own problem. In the absence of any decision yet regarding the use of the name "Lutheran Free Church—Not Merged" by the Association, both sides move toward legal confrontation in the district courts.

Let it be understood by whoever reads this that we of the Association feel clearly that our position regarding the two above disputes is the correct one. Our understanding of the Principles of the Lutheran Free Church (found elsewhere in this paper) gives *absolute power* under God to the local congregation and its constitution. We question that this right was safeguarded and protected in the recent merger. But it is also not our purpose here to further discuss that point. And we want to say that we do not question the sincerity of those people in Valley City who are for merger that they believe that they

are standing on what is right.

After considerable thought we have concluded (and by the decision of the editorial board) that it would be good to present "our" side of the Valley City story. We have been given a copy of a statement written by the "anti-merger" portion of First Lutheran Church in Valley City and which appeared first in the *Times-Record* of that city. Its exact authorship is not known to us and we present it with minor changes. It is followed by a copy of the Fundamental Principles of the Lutheran Free Church and that, in turn, by a concluding statement bringing the situation more up-to-date.

People ask, "What is happening in Valley City?" Some are not aware of the issues involved. We hope that this will be helpful to them.

Let us conclude by making these two points very clear. We do not want to arouse ill-will by presenting this material. We do not want to inflame old antagonisms or ignite new ones. If this should be the result we will be very disappointed. Let us have the spirit which is being shown by the pastor and many of his people who are actually living in the situation in Valley City and which situation we all regret so much.

And the second point is this. We do not want to see a rash of legal actions proceeding from this. Every congregation is free to do what it chooses, under God, but let every decision be weighed in the throes of earnest prayer. To do otherwise will bode no good for our future as a continuation of a Lutheran Free Church fellowship.

REMEMBER THE GENERAL FUND

It is more common to hear pleas for missions and schools than for general funds. In local congregations it is usually three or four (at least) times easier to raise money for the general fund (operating) than for benevolences. No one may need to rise to the defense of the general treasury while the vocal advocates for missions, schools and charities are sometimes hard to come by in a business meeting.

We want to foster a real love for world outreach for Christ. Already we have a strong base of mission interest in our fellowship. One of our great challenges will be the establishment of a theological seminary and Bible school. This will call for a high level of giving on the part of our people. We hope that our congregations are not neglecting charitable works on their lists of giving.

But during this month of January we strongly encourage our churches to remember the general fund of the Association. Where there is a deep feeling to designate a gift to missions, schools, etc., let that be done. But where no offense would be caused, why not send gifts during January to the general fund? This would build up that fund to a stronger position for the beginning of our first real fiscal year which starts Feb. 1. At that time the Stewardship Committee will be giving us helps in planning our giving for 1964.

To send a contribution to the general fund you need only send a check to Lutheran Association without designation to any special cause.

Contributions during January are much needed and will make it possible for our Association to enter the new fiscal year with a respectable balance which will stand us in good stead as we face in earnest the year's tasks which will take all that we can possibly raise. It is heart-warming to see what some congregations and individuals are giving thus far. We want the giving of all, as each is able, to be an encouragement and a sign to one another that we mean business for God and the blessed Gospel of Jesus Christ.

PERSONAL TRAGEDIES

As we write, the old year, 1963, draws toward its close with news of another step in one of Hollywood's most tangled and notorious marital affairs. How sad it is that this place which has such an effect on Ameri-

can life through the film industry should set such a poor example in the personal lives of its people. Small wonder, then, that Christian people deplore the idol worship of those who live by a moral code far from God's Law.

Much as we lament the example of those in the public eye who regard the marriage covenant lightly, we must also feel sorry for them because dissolution of wedlock is personal tragedy and they bear scars from it. And what of the children who suffer most of all and who will pass on to their children an insecurity that may bring more disruption, even to the third and fourth generations?

Sins against the sixth commandment are not all committed by people involved in divorce suits, as we know, but there is something about breaking what God has joined together that makes it special. We must not treat it as of minor importance and we must do what we can to preserve the sanctity of the home.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR SCHEDULE FOR 1964

The first date given is the date on which the *Ambassador* is printed every two weeks. The second date is the deadline at which material for that issue must reach the editor. No guarantee of inclusion is made when material does not arrive in time. Observe

that one deadline in the summer varies from the standard procedure. In sending notices of meetings, keep in mind that subscribers receive their papers up to a week following the publication date. All material must be sent to the editor for his decision.

Publication	Editor's Deadline		WMF Bible Study
January 14	December 28		Yes
January 28	January 11		
February 11	January 25		Yes
February 25	February 8		
March 10	February 22		Yes
March 24	March 7	Easter	
April 7	March 21		
April 21	April 4		Yes
May 5	April 18		
May 19	May 2	Memorial Day	Yes
June 2	May 16	Pre-Convention	
June 16	May 30		Yes
June 30	June 13	Convention Reports	
July 14	June 27		Yes
July 28	July 11		
August 25	August 1		Yes
September 8	August 22		
September 22	September 5		Yes
October 6	September 19		
October 20	October 3	Reformation	Yes
November 3	October 17		
November 17	October 31	Thanksgiving	
December 1	November 14		
December 15	November 28	Christmas	
December 29	December 12		

W M

WORLD MISSIONS

THE FIELDS ARE WHITE UNTO HARVEST
A NEW YEAR — NEW LANDS — NEW CHRISTIANS



John and Ruby Abel and family
Director of Missions, Box 905, Fargo, N. Dak.

A Blessed New Year to Each of You!

HOW can it help but be blessed as we prepare to carry His name to new areas, new peoples and new frontiers. And what is His name? Isaiah well foretold it: "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). If Jesus has become these things to you, then this New Year will be blessed no matter what His grace has in store for you.

First and foremost, of course, the New Year means new opportunities to live for the cause for which He came and died and rose again, the cause of world evangelization. Our Savior will not be satisfied until the Good News is preached to every nation, tongue, and tribe. Can we be dedicated to anything less in this New Year? Our family would like to rededi-

cate itself again this year to Missions; how about you? Shall we not march arm in arm as members of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations to tell the world that to know Him is to find Him to be Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace?

—John H. Abel

PERSONALITIES

Mr. Roy Quanrud, Northwood, N. Dak., is serving the Hampden, N. Dak., parish at the present time.

Rev. G. Spletstoesser, Pine River, Minn., has been accepted into the Association on a fellowship basis, not probationary, as previously reported.

Mrs. Trygve F. Dahle

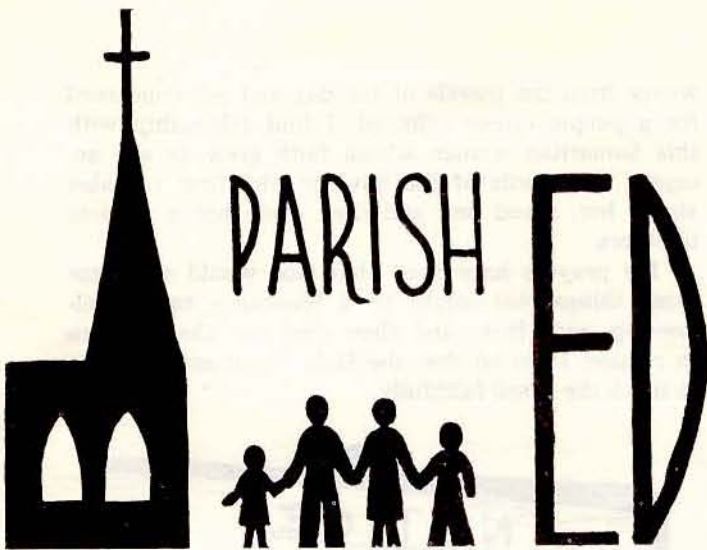
Agnes Hazel Hanson was born at Pierpont, S. Dak., May 22, 1905, of parents Martin and Minnie (nee Winson) Hanson. She was baptized in the Bethlehem Lutheran Church of Pierpont. When she was 2½ years old her father passed away. Her mother married John Tastad, Pierpont, when Agnes was five years old. She was confirmed in the Bethlehem Lutheran Church of Pierpont where the family belonged.

The family moved to Waubay, S. Dak., where she attended and finished high school, after which she taught country school for two years. Then she attended the Lutheran Bible Institute, Minneapolis, Minn., for one year.

She was united in marriage, July 11, 1926, to Pastor Trygve F. Dahle of Waubay, S. Dak. To this union six children were born, three boys and three girls. She has stood faithfully by her husband, sharing the good and the hardships of the ministry, without complaint, for 37 years, serving parishes in three states and one Canadian province. She was his helpmate, cook, nurse, parish secretary (without salary), a wonderful mother and wife, and a witness for her Lord in the home, church and community. She enjoyed good health until she entered the University Hospital, Minneapolis, Minn., Oct. 5, 1963. She underwent surgery for the removal of a brain tumor on Oct. 8, from which she first made a remarkable recovery. However, the tumor was malignant and Mrs. Dahle passed away at the Rice Memorial Hospital, Willmar, Minn., Friday noon, December 6, 1963, at the age of 58 years, 6 months and 14 days. Her father, step-father and two brothers preceded her in death.

She leaves to mourn her departure, her husband, Pastor Trygve F. Dahle, Spicer, Minn., three sons, Trygve F. Jr., San Bernardino, Cal., Olaf, Colton, Cal., and Ronald, Minneapolis; three daughters, Adelene, Los Angeles, Cal.,

[Continued on page 10]



Edited by Mrs. David C. Hanson

LESSON PREPARATION

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the Word of Truth" (II Tim. 2:15).

PAGES FROM THE DIARY OF A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

Dear Diary,

It's good to be in the quiet of my room after the strain of this morning. My Sunday school class has never been so unruly! It was a good thing the session ended when it did—five more minutes and I would have been shouting at the children. It must have been a mistake to answer the call for teachers last fall—I don't know enough about the Bible to teach. Even after spending an hour and a half on the lesson last night, I couldn't do justice to the Bible story. They'll have to get someone else to take the class...

MUCH LATER

It's bedtime, and this has been a long day; but I have to share the New Year's resolution I made tonight. Mrs. Anderson (she's been teaching Sunday school forever) was a sympathetic listener to my problems after the evening service. She suggested I try to study a little bit each day of the week, and she's given me an outline to follow. It looks like an ambitious program; but after this morning I'm willing to try anything. I'm about to try the first step! Tonight I'm supposed to read the story from the Bible and ask God to give ME something from His Word. In other words, I can forget about my class, and study for my own sake. That sounds easy, doesn't it? I'll let you know how I progress...

MONDAY NIGHT

Dear Diary,

The first two steps toward my lesson are com-

pleted, and the week has hardly begun! After reading the story of the woman at the well (John 4:1-42) from my Bible tonight, it was time to look for things that I didn't understand. It was a great help to study the history of the Samaritan people in the reference books I borrowed from our church library. Now I understand why the "Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans." I had only planned to spend a short time in study, but by the time I finished reading about water and wells in the Holy Land, I could hardly put the books away. It really is important to know something about the living habits and customs of Bible times.

My prayers tonight have been for willingness to study, so that I may have a better understanding of God's Word.

TUESDAY NIGHT

Back to the Bible again, dear diary, and it's time for me to think about TEACHING the story I have been studying this week. The children have heard it so many times that I'll have to think of a new approach if I want to hold their interest. A map might be helpful—it could be used to explain how the Jews crossed to the other side of the Jordan River so they wouldn't be contaminated by being among the Samaritans. There were some pictures of Jacob's well in those reference books; perhaps the children would be interested in knowing that a church has been built over the well. We'll see...

LATER

I've decided to use only the word MISSIONARY as a visual aid to introduce my lesson. Perhaps it will stimulate discussion if I ask the children to tell me what comes to mind when they see the word on the blackboard. It should be helpful in bringing out the thought that our Lord Jesus died for all races and showed by His example that we should love those who are different from us. Come to think of it, the woman at the well was a missionary, wasn't she? For the Bible says that many believed in Christ because of her testimony. And it is in this chapter of John that our Lord reminds us that the "fields are already white for harvest."

I prayed for my class tonight, and asked that God would supply the wisdom I need to teach them. If only my testimony could be like that of the Samaritan woman, so that the children might believe in the Lord Jesus.

WEDNESDAY

Dear Diary,

Today, for the first time in my life, I wrote a story! After reading the Bible story again, it seemed as if it would be worth while to write it in words that my class would comprehend. It wasn't nearly as difficult as I expected it would be, and I found myself inserting some of the things I had learned earlier in the week. In spite of the fact that it made me feel

pretty silly, I practiced telling the story to the mirror. Facial expressions do add impact to the story.

My prayers were that the Lord would help me to present the story at the level of the understanding of my children.

THURSDAY

Dear Diary,

Guess which Bible story I read today? You're right! It was John 4 again. Each day the Lord has given me something new from His Word. If my students were younger, I'd encourage them to make a well to take home with them as a reminder of their lesson. But as long as we're fifth graders, perhaps we should continue with the thought of being missionaries and, if there is time, discuss our own responsibilities.

It must have been this thought that led me to pray for my youngsters by name tonight.

FRIDAY NIGHT

This week is almost over, dear diary, and my preparations for Sunday are nearly complete. Tonight I made lists. The first list planned every minute of the class session. Even the minutes used for taking attendance were counted. (After last week's experience I don't want to give the children a chance to get restless.) It was encouraging to see that I had more material than I will need. The second list concerned all the materials I will need to teach. Everything is picked together and ready for Sunday morning.

Then I prayed that God would also be preparing the hearts and minds of my students so they will be receptive to His Word.

SATURDAY

Dear Diary,

There was no last minute rush to study my lesson. Instead this has been a day of review and reflection on the things God has given me through this lesson. I love the picture of my "human" Lord Jesus,

weariness from the travels of the day and yet concerned for a people others rejected. I find fellowship with this Samaritan woman whose faith grew as she accepted the words of the Saviour who first revealed sin to her, saved her, and then made her a witness to others.

My prayers have been that God would show me those things that might be a hindrance to my fellowship with Him, and then give me the strength to remove them so that the Holy Spirit may use me to teach the Word faithfully.



Another sign of progress in the A.F.I.C.

[Continued from page 8]

Mrs. Eugene Zugschwert (Marjorie), St. Paul, and Mrs. Ed Knutson (Norma), Elbow, Sask., Canada; her aged mother, Mrs. John Tastad; three brothers, Jalmer, Pierpont, S. Dak., John, Longview, Wash., and Orville, Aberdeen, S. Dak.; many other relatives and a host of friends.

Funeral services were held Tues-

day, December 10, at 1:00 p.m., at the Green Lake Lutheran Church, Spicer, Minn., Pastor Julius Hermunslie, officiating. He was assisted by Pastor Morris Eggen and Pastor Ernst Dahle, who spoke for the family. The body was laid to rest in the Green Lake Cemetery under the direction of the Farness Funeral Home, Spicer, Minn.

—Corr.

"You turn things upside down!

Shall the potter be regarded as the clay; that the thing made should say of its maker,

'He did not make me'; or the thing formed say of him who formed it,

'He has no understanding?'"

—Isaiah 29: 16



WOMEN for Christ

BE YE THANKFUL

GIVING thanks always for all things unto God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20).

Are we always thankful? By nature we do not have the spirit of thankfulness. Children must be taught to say "thank you" and to manifest a spirit of thanksgiving even if they do not feel like it. We are inclined to take things too much for granted even as adults. When we are born again our hearts are changed and we are given a new nature that wants to praise the Lord. True thanksgiving, then, comes from a right relationship with God.

We can best express our gratitude for all God's tender mercies by simply saying, "Thank you, Father," and not always waiting until prayer time to tell Him so. I'm sure it will delight His heart to have His child look up into His face for a moment at times during a busy day and gratefully acknowledge some favor or blessing.

The Lord would have us be thankful for all things. If we give heed to His exhortation it will add greatly to our blessings. True thankfulness will urge us to minister in love to those about us. Acts of love to others are a direct ministry to our Lord who said, "Whatsoever ye have done to the least of these of mine ye have done it even unto me." If we continue

in thankfulness and love our lives will be more and more fruitful until our hearts will burst forth in praise in the words of the Psalmist, "My cup runneth over." Yes, if we would count our many blessings we would find out they are more than we can number.

This year we have a special reason to be thankful. We are grateful for our home here near Spicer where we can rest and relax. We have had a busy summer but the Lord has given us strength to carry on and we thank Him for it. There are many open doors and we need to work, for the night cometh when no man can work.

Then, too, we are thankful for our Association of Free Lutheran Congregations where we are free to work in the freedom God intends the Christian church to have. We are thankful for the work of our Women's Missionary Federation. We rejoice as we see how the Lord has blessed us through the year. May we be kept humble and let Him lead also in the future that all may be done to His honor and glory.

"Our soul waiteth for the Lord: He is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His holy name. Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in Thee" (Psalm 33:20-22).

—Mrs. Morris Eggen
Spicer, Minn.



Letters TO THE EDITOR

I believe that a lot of today's preaching does not meet the needs of the people. Just as always, we must preach to convict sinners of their need of the Saviour and to draw Christians into a closer and more dedicated walk with Christ.

There is much preaching about the Bible but let us hear the Word itself: "Thus saith the Lord!" Just as the United States Constitution is the highest law of our land so the Bible is the highest law of God. (Here II Tim. 3:16, 17 and II Tim. 4:2 are quoted.) I believe the Bible contains characters and illustrations to meet any situation we may have.

So often the cross of Christ is taken for granted. I believe this should be the center or core of each message. After all, this is the only thing that really counts. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin" (Heb. 9:22). This was the message of the early Church. Let Christ be exalted and lifted up. Tell the people what Jesus has done, what He can do, what He is doing, and what He will do.

With the Holy Spirit leading and guiding you, preach as if it was your last message to us and the last sermon one of us may hear.

North Dakota

(Thank you to all who have written on the subject of preaching. Now we close our discussion of preaching for the present with this reminder, "If there were more prayer in the pew there would be more power in the pulpit."—Ed.)

Ladies Aids are asked to send lists of their officers to Mrs. Albert Moen, 709 Cherry Street, Grand Forks, N. Dak., at the earliest convenience.

EVALUATION SHEET

May we have your assistance? After nearly a year of publication we would like to get your reactions to what you have seen up to now in *The Lutheran Ambassador*. Check the blanks which best report your feelings and feel free to write any comments and suggestions that you have in the spaces provided. Mail this in as soon as possible. Do not enclose your name unless you wish to do so.

Send this report to:

Editor, The Lutheran Ambassador
Roslyn, S. Dak.

How I rate the features of *The Lutheran Ambassador*:

According to the Word: Too long ____ Too short ____ Right length ____

Editorials: Too many ____ Not enough ____ Right amount ____

Editorial content (you may check one or more): Poor choice of topics ____ Lack of insight ____ Do not represent spirit of the Association ____ Need to deal with more controversial subjects ____ Too difficult to understand ____ Satisfactory ____

Mission pages: Inspirational ____ Not inspirational ____

Parish Ed: Found helpful ____ Not helpful ____

Women for Christ: Enjoy it ____ Do not enjoy it ____

News of the Association: Too much ____ Not enough ____ Right amount ____

News of other churches: Too much ____ Not enough ____ Right amount ____

Lutheran news (outside of the Association): Too much ____ Not enough ____ Right amount ____

Do you believe we should report the whereabouts of former Lutheran Free Church pastors as we have done? Yes ____ No ____

Sermons by pastors: Helpful ____ Not helpful ____

President's messages: Inspirational ____ Not inspirational ____

Do you approve of the material on the Valley City situation found in this issue? Yes ____ No ____

What topics should be dealt with (or dealt with more) in our paper?

Would you like to see some report on congregational giving in the paper periodically? Yes ____ No ____

Do you have any specific comments to make? _____

What other specific suggestions do you have? _____

Thank you kindly for your participation. We shall carefully consider all the replies.

The Editor

GOSPEL TEAM TO TOUR SCANDINAVIA

The first Lutheran gospel team to Scandinavia will leave Minneapolis, Minnesota, on June 9, 1964, bound for a three-month stay in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark.

The team, invited by various youth movements within the state churches of the Scandinavian countries, will present programs largely of an evangelistic nature in churches, prayer houses, schools, Bible Institutes, and public pavillions.

According to David L. C. Anderson, son of a Lutheran pastor and a former member of a Youth for Christ teen team to South America, the purpose of the team is to present the claims of Jesus Christ to as many young people as possible. Mr. Anderson says, "We are going for the sole purpose of communicating what Jesus Christ demands of each of us—first, a commitment to Him, then an unre-served dedication to the cause of winning others.

The team of six, primarily of Lutheran background, feels that it is significant that, although the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, and other groups have sent teams of young people to the Scandinavian countries, never has there been a team of Lutheran youth sent in an attempt to reach the Scandinavian Lutheran youth for Jesus Christ.

The group will use music, both vocal and instrumental, and testimonies in their programs. A member of the team will preach also.

According to Rev. Torsten Josephsson, an ordained pastor in the Church of Sweden and the general secretary of a youth movement within that church, 90 percent of the young people in Sweden rarely go to church after confirmation. They feel that Christianity has nothing to say to young people. Rev. Josephsson said, "They feel that Christianity, the Bible, and the church are 'not for us!'" He said, "They say they 'have no need for God!'"

[Continued on page 15]

"How Shall I Tithe?"

by Pastor John Abel
Fargo, N. Dak.

BRING ye all the tithes. . ." (Mal. 3:10).

This is not an argument for tithing. It is simply a brief statement on how to tithe, offered to those who have already made up their minds to begin and is based largely upon the experiences and habits of tithers over many years. Probably no two administer the tithe exactly alike, and the Christian has only his conscience to say, "This is the right way." God's word announces the principles, leaving the method of operation to individual judgment and intelligence.

It is hoped that the general practices cited here may be of real value to those earnestly striving to answer for themselves the ever pressing question, "How can I be certain that I have tithed?" Do not take these suggestions as the last word on this subject. Common sense, fortified by intelligent study of Scripture and by earnest prayer, will lead every tither to a satisfactory solution of his personal tithing problem.

Two Extremes To Be Avoided

One of two extreme positions is sometimes taken by the tither, either of which would seem equally erroneous. The first is to deduct all living expenses from one's income before determining the tithe. God asks for "the firstfruits" not for a tithe of what is left after His children have had their fill.

The second extreme, although less often encountered, is the view that a man in business should tithe his whole income before deducting the cost of operating his business. Business authorities estimate that in normal times most businesses operate with not over 10 percent profit. Therefore, one would have to spend \$90,000 to secure an income of \$10,000, or his tithe \$1,000.

How to Tithe a Salary

A straight salary presents the simplest of tithing problems. A salaried man ordinarily carries none of the business expense, and receives his stipend regularly each week or month. Except for perhaps transportation to and from work there is no expense which might be regarded as a business expense. Therefore, the salaried person better than any other is able "on the first day of the week" to tell rather definitely what his contribution to his church will be, provided his income does not vary. This is simplified by some salaried workers who place in a "tithe account" 10 percent of wages or salary as received, entering the other 90 percent to the credit of their drawing account. There is no difficulty in keeping the money separated and the tendency to over-spend one account at the expense of the other is reduced to a minimum.

Since the withholding law went into effect a new term has been introduced into the vocabulary of most salaried workers. It is "take-home-pay," and the question arises, Should the worker tithe his "take-home-pay" or his gross earnings, before taxes, old-age insurance, hospitalization, etc., are deducted?

The withholding law, as has been stated, takes out income tax, old age insurance, dues, hospitalization, etc., in advance. Here one will have to pray through on the question. Certainly one cannot deduct income tax before tithing, but other dues and insurances perhaps are something like a business expense and some families may find it necessary to consider them as such.

The Tithing Merchant

A merchant, wholesale or retail, will find it no more difficult to arrive at his net income than the farmer or manufacturer. Like these, he must include as part of his busi-

ness expense such items as clerks' salaries, heat and light for his store, cost of his stock, insurance thereon, business rent and taxes, losses in uncollected accounts, etc. If, for example, on this basis he finds that out of a gross income of \$50,000 his costs amount to \$40,000, his net income will be \$10,000, and his tithe will be \$1,000.

The Tithing Professional Man

The tithing of a professional man is not as difficult to arrive at as some seem to believe. After deducting professional and business expenses, including office rent, secretary's salary, office heat and light, car or travel expense, the purchase or upkeep of professional equipment, etc., it is easy to see what is left, provided a careful account has been kept of all collections during the year. In the case of a physician who is asked to do much of what is commonly called "charity work," it might be better to simply charge all materials at net cost to the costs of doing business, considering his time as an investment in good will rather than as an item to be charged against his tithe.

With high income taxes making large inroads into the income of those who are in the higher income brackets, some may be wondering whether one should tithe the gross income or the net income after taxes have been paid.

The Federal Government allows us a maximum deduction of 30 percent of our gross income for charitable and religious purposes. This gross income is that before exemptions for dependents and deductions for taxes, interests, etc., are made. The tithe should be a minimum of one-tenth of this gross income figure. Certainly we should be willing to give only two thirds of what the government allows us to deduct in our income tax report.

Let's take a case in point: sup-

pose my income is \$300,000, the tax rate on my income above \$200,000 is approximately \$197,000, and my net income is approximately \$73,000. All of my contributions of \$30,000 have been taken out of the 82 percent tax bracket. If I tithe after taxes, my contributions will be 170 percent of approximately \$85,500 (\$300,000 less taxes of approximately \$214,500) or \$8,550, but my net income is \$76,950. I have contributed \$21,450 less to religious and charitable purposes, but my net income is only \$3,950 greater than it would have been had I contributed 1 percent of the \$300,000.

Even on a large income of \$300,000 the net difference between what I have left if I tithe before paying my taxes and that which I have if I tithe after paying my taxes is approximately 1 percent. This principle will in general apply to all tithers, regardless of the amount of their income. I give away more if I tithe before taxes, but I have almost as much left for myself.

—thus far from a tract

In conclusion, remember we are not under the law, but under grace. Yet our Lord and the apostles never discouraged the common practice of Israel, which was to give a "tenth of their increase" from "the firstfruits," or a tithe of that which they received.

There is a real promise of blessing to those who have faith and discipline to tithe: "I will open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. . ." (vs. 10). Read the entire passage of verses 6-12.

When we think of the promise in this text, "all nations shall call you blessed," we remember our goals and faith promises as an Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, to raise 60 thousand dollars for our on-going program. We desire to open at least one new mission field and send out 6 missionaries in 1964. My what opportunities and blessed privileges our Lord has before us as Bible-

believing, evangelistic, free Lutherans. Can we do any less than give Him our best? Shall we do any less than a tithe? Many may be able to do much more than this. Pray it through with your Lord and then, friend, do as our text says: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there might be meat in mine house." Bring your gifts to your local congregation and ask your congregation to make a generous contribution to our mission program. Those who might be led to send something direct to the Association for all of our budget needs can write either to our treasurer in Minneapolis, or to us here in the Association Mission Office, Box 905, Fargo, North Dakota.

Let us go forward on our knees in prayer, but let it not be an empty petition of words. We look for His blessing, so let us "bring all the tithes into His storehouse."

CENTRAL MINNESOTA DISTRICT WMF MET IN CLITHERAL RECENTLY

The Covenant Church at Clitheral, Minnesota, was the scene of a rally of the Central Minnesota District Women's Missionary Federation on Nov. 15.

Pastor Carl Ostby of Dalton led the morning and afternoon hymn sings and gave the opening devotions. Several women took part in the prayer sessions. President of the group, Miss Bertha Anderson, Henning, gave the Bible study on Israel in God's plan.

Mrs. Eddie Floen and Mrs. Robert Carlson sang a duet and Pastor Ostby a solo at the afternoon meeting. Pastor Oscar Monson of Fergus Falls offered the closing prayer.

We had a wonderful time around the Word of God. We thank Him for the many blessings received and for His presence with us. Praise His holy name.

Miss Lydia Christenson, Sec'y

SOUTHERN BAPTISTS PLAN MISSION WORK IN ICELAND

Zurich, Switzerland (LWF)—A Baptist foreign mission board of the United States had decided to start missionary work in Iceland, Luxembourg and Austria, the European Baptist Press Service reported here.

It quoted the area mission secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention as explaining that in each of the three countries the work would begin with an English-language ministry but that "efforts will also be made to extend Baptist witness beyond this."

The National Church of Iceland has been Lutheran since the 16th century Reformation, and nearly the entire population is counted in its membership. Austria and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg are overwhelmingly Roman Catholic countries with Protestant minorities which are mostly Lutheran.

NOTICE OF PASTORS' CONFERENCE

The Pastors' Conference, January 6-8, will be held in Fargo, N. Dak., at the Missions Center, and not in Tioga, N. Dak., as previously announced. The sessions are not open to the public, but there will be an evangelistic service for all on Tuesday, Jan. 7, at 8 o'clock. Pastor Jay Erickson, Faith, S. Dak., will preach and Pastor Carl Ostby, Dalton, Minn., will provide the special music.

WINTER BIBLE CONFERENCE SET FOR WINGER, MINNESOTA

The Board of Administration announces a winter Bible conference to be held in Winger, Minn., February 11-13. The Rev. Harry C. Molstre is the local pastor. The conference will begin at 8:00 p.m., on Feb. 11. Program details will be given at a later date, but plan now to attend.



STEWARDSHIP

ALL THAT I HAVE
IS THINE ALONE

people are giving many hours absolutely gratis in order that the *Ambassador* can be printed at a reasonable cost? These friends volunteer their services! We thank God for them. Let us encourage them by a shower of special gifts for our paper.

Think of the shower that would result if we sent in one dollar, two dollars, three dollars, four dollars, or five dollars this week. God would use our gifts in an important work.

You and I want a good, clear window in our church home. God is blessing us and has much to show us as we look at the vineyard.

Karl Stendal

PASTOR R. H. HOFSTAD PASSED AWAY DEC. 16

Pastor R. H. Hofstad, 82, passed away at his home in Odessa, Minnesota, on Monday, Dec. 16. Funeral services were held in Milbank and rural Grenville, S. Dak., on Dec. 21. A complete obituary will be found in the next issue of the *Lutheran Ambassador*.

[Continued from page 12]

The team is being sponsored by various Lutheran churches, organizations, and individuals who are interested in youth evangelism.

—News Release

(We believe the witness of this team merits our prayers for its success. We only question whether this is the "first" team of American Lutheran youth who have attempted to reach Scandinavian youth for Jesus Christ. But whatever the situation, we rejoice in this witness even as we thank God for the witness of Scandinavian Christians among us from time to time.—Ed.)

A HOUSE NEEDS WINDOWS

A few months ago my family and I visited friends in another state. Their beautiful home is built on a hill above the bay. Naturally the largest window in the living room faces the sound, or bay, leading in from the ocean. Through that window we watched ships, barges, tugboats and smaller boats go in and out the bay. We saw hundreds of homes, as well as business places, docks and some factories. In the evening thousands of lights glittered and were reflected in the water. All these things we could enjoy through that large living room picture window. The sight intrigued and thrilled me. Needless to say, some careful shopping for a building lot made this site possible.

Windows are essential to any home. They admit light, they afford a look at the world outside and remind us that we are a part of that world.

Today I would like to call attention to another kind of window letting in another kind of light into another kind of home. That home is our Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. That light is information and spiritual inspiration. And that window is our *Lutheran Ambassador*.

In the many months I have traveled, I have found a people hungry for reliable information, for an understanding of things as they actually are, and for a bond of fellowship between them and other like-minded Christians who have similar concerns. What these friends are concerned and even disturbed about is evident by the questions they ask in homes and information meetings throughout

our area.

When publication of the *Lutheran Ambassador* was launched, it was done because it would fill a need which nothing else could fill. Friends in many places have said that they read the paper in one sitting; they look forward to getting the next issue; they subscribe for relatives and friends, and they hand extra copies to others as opportunities come. All this is tremendously encouraging, not least so to the editor.

At the outset the *Ambassador* had but eight pages; then it was enlarged to twelve. Now we rejoice that we have reached our goal of 16 pages. It is gratifying to note the number of subscribers who are not affiliated with our Association but are one with us in spirit.

The *Lutheran Ambassador* is a window, and every subscriber can help in letting in more light and making the view more clear and important. As news is sent to the editor from groups and congregations, as thoughts of inspiration are shared in our common bond of church fellowship—the *Ambassador*, we can pray and think and work together. For example, we are experiencing revival in several of our congregations. While only God can add names to the Book of Life, we do rejoice when souls seek Jesus Christ and show forth the new man in a daily walk. Such reports in our paper would confirm to many prayer warriors that they have been heard at the heavenly Father's throne.

If God has showered blessings upon us, let us shower our *Ambassador* business manager with funds to make our paper the best possible. Did you know that some

YOUTH CONVENTION



The banquet was held in the Gardner Hotel in Fargo with about 300 in attendance.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR
 Box 652
 Grafton, North Dakota

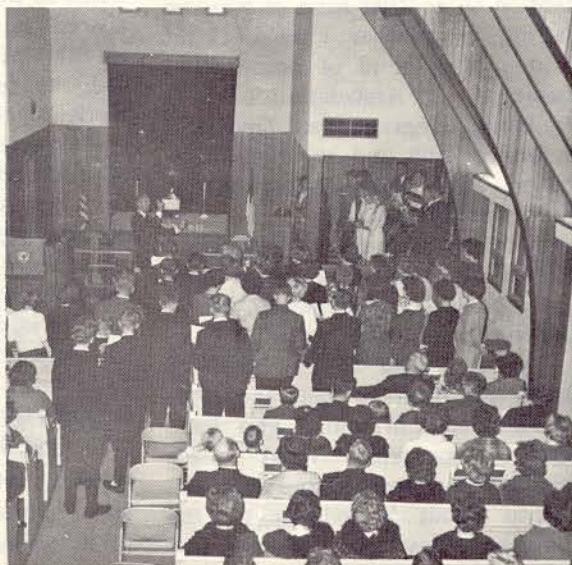


Pictured here are the new officers of the Luther League Federation. Seated is Francis Monseth, first vice-president. Standing, left to right, are Pastor Richard Snipstead, president; JoAnn Broden, treasurer; Janet Aasness, secretary; Karen Moe, devotional life secretary; and Bonnie Quam, second vice-president.

PHOTOS



Following the banquet on Saturday night, the convention saw "The Tony Fontane Story" in the auditorium of the Ben Franklin Junior High School.



The convention choir under the direction of Mr. Victor Svanoec sang at the Sunday morning service.