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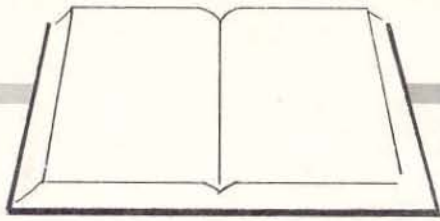
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According to the Word

THE WORD FOR THE WORLD

“And we have the prophetic word made more sure. You will do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts” (II Pet. 1:19).

Very few readers of *The Lutheran Ambassador* did not know about the Bible as children. But as to how many really know now what it contains, there is a question.

For instance, a prominent American minister gave an unannounced quiz to his people one Sunday morning. The tabulated results showed that one-third did not know what made Nazareth famous. One-half of the congregation did not know what happened in Gethsemane, and a fourth could not state what took place on Calvary. Three-fourths of those assembled were at a loss to identify Simon Peter.

The minister woefully concluded that 63% of his people were totally illiterate biblically, 20% possessed a sketchy knowledge, and only 5% were really familiar with the Scriptures.

I would venture to guess that our readers would come out better than this pastor's congregation in a similar test. But there would still be much disappointment. Now it is true that not much factual

knowledge is needed for salvation. It is necessary to know one's own sins and the wrath of God toward sin. A second great essential fact is that Christ has paid the wages of sin and there is life in Him.

The essential facts for salvation are few and simple, but at the same time we must remember that a living faith will want to grow in the knowledge of God through His Word. And indeed this growth must take place or the faith will die of malnutrition.

When Queen Elizabeth was crowned, she was presented a Bible for this stated purpose: “To keep your Majesty ever mindful of the Law and the Gospel of God as the rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes, we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is Wisdom; this is the royal Law; these are the lively oracles of God.”

This “Word for the World,” what is it?

(1) It provides us with our only dependable picture of God. We may find God in nature or see Him in a God-like person, but it is in the Bible that we meet Him in a special way. The Holy Spirit through the pages of the Bible brings the living God before us.

And what is the God like who is revealed? He is the almighty Creator. He is holy and just. And He is the God of love whom His followers may confidently call “Father.”

(2) This Word gives us our only dependable picture of man. It reveals two things about Him. First, man is a sinner. Through inherited sin and actual misdeeds, he has come short of God's glory. In himself he flouts God's way and insists his own is better; but, of course, it isn't and he faces a rude awakening.

The second revelation about man is that he is meant to be a saint. He is created for eternal fellowship with God. Sin throws a monkey-wrench into God's plans, but He still pursues man in order to save him from himself.

(3) The “Word for the World” gives us our only dependable picture of the Savior. A missionary to primitive tribes in Matto Grosso, Brazil, attracted the attention of the natives when he intently looked at small pieces of paper (his mail). He told them that he received news in this way. Similarly, he told them that when he read the Bible, he was receiving news from God, the great Father of all. And afterward, when they would see him reading the book, they would ask, “What news is there today from the great Father?”

What news, indeed? The news that there is peace and hope through Jesus Christ. It was news 1900 years ago and it is today. If you despair in a life without apparent meaning, the “Word for the World” has a message that you can't afford to miss.

—Raynard Huglen

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Even So, Come, Lord Jesus

by Pastor Ernest J. Langness, McVille, N. Dak.

"Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:27).

The word "advent" is derived from the Latin and means "the coming." During this season we prepare ourselves to celebrate the anniversary of Christ's birth, the coming of the Son of God to this earth in human form. But we must also prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ into our hearts so that we may be ready for His coming on Judgment Day.

Joy fills our hearts as God speaks to us in the Scriptures. Our joy rests in Him who out of love for us as sinners was sent by the heavenly Father into the world to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Our advent desire is, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Our advent prayer is, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

What joy and comfort comes into our lives as we behold God in His infinite wisdom and love as He sent His only begotten Son into this world. The fulness of time had come. Now we can see Jesus.

We see Him in humility and poverty, born in a lowly manger, a humble birth so low that the lowliest sinner might behold Him as his Savior and find in Him the answer to all his needs.

We see Him as a lad of twelve years in the temple "about his Father's business," discussing the Scriptures with the scribes. He became so occupied that He forgot to return home with His parents. Yes, He was conscious of His Father's will at the age of twelve. What an example for our young people! For the youth who can see Jesus about His Father's business, He asks, "Will you follow Me? Will you tell other youth that I love them, I have redeemed them in order that they may be mine and

experience real joy in their lives?"

We see Him as He begins His public ministry. Here is the challenge to young men of today as He calls, "Come and follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" and "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations."

Yes, He has work that must be done, and He is calling for disciples. Will you answer His call? Will you answer, "Here am I, send me!"?

Throughout His public ministry He sought to reveal the Father to us and God's way of salvation. His miracles were not only to relieve the suffering one but to direct the hearts of men to God the Father who sent His Son into this world that all men might be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

We see Him as our Savior, suffering for us, taking our guilt and our punishment upon himself. We behold Him, as John the Baptist said, "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." We hear Him say, "It is finished." Salvation is complete.

We see Him as the resurrected Christ, which assures us that He is the Son of God who has fully paid for our sins, given us the promise of the resurrection, and given us power to rise from death in sin to live a victorious Christian life.


We see Him as the ascended Christ who is at the right hand of God the Father. He is our advocate interceding for us. As Christ ascended, the disciples watched in amazement, gazing up into heaven until the angel came and spoke to them saying, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

Our prayer today is, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." There is so much unrest and distress of nations. This phrase describes the world since December 7, 1941. At first we were in a hot war. The hot war became a cold war. The nations have been ill at ease, fearful, distressed and sometimes near despair. This situation is one of the signs of the last days. Thus God reminds us that soon His Son will come for the final judgment. He urges us to be ready for His coming. Should we be afraid, despair and give up hope? No, in Jesus we have an all-sufficient Savior and through Him full forgiveness for all our sins, so that in Him we may have all boldness to stand on the day of judgment.

With this in mind we pray, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The verse of our text, "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory," brings hope to all believers. In the confession of our Christian faith we confess, "And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead." As we think of this coming it will be quite different than when He came the first time. Only a very few knew of His first coming in the form of a babe in the manger, but when He shall return it will be a visible coming. In Revelation 1:7, "Every eye shall see him," including yours and mine. It will be a coming in power. We might think of the most impressive power on this earth, multiply that by 100,000, and then perhaps we would have a faint idea of the power Jesus will exhibit at His last coming.

Yes, He will come as King of kings and every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that

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WOMEN for Christ

Eastern North Dakota

"Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation" (Ps. 95:2a, 1b).

This was not only our theme but the spirit as we met in the Ny Stavanger Lutheran Church, Buxton, on Oct. 23, for the Women's Missionary Federation meeting of the Eastern North Dakota District. Sessions were at 10:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. There were 119 persons registered.

Devotions were given by Mrs. Albert Moen, Grand Forks. A hymn sing was led by Mrs. Henry Hanson, Portland. We were thrilled as the place was filled with praises to God. Our theme song was "In Times Like These." Miss Pearl Aanstad, Hampden, gave the Bible study. Special music was a duet by Mrs. E. Miedema and Mrs. Frank Johnson, Valley City, and a selection by the following from Binford: Mrs. Daniel Oien, Mrs. Frank Oien, Mrs. David Jacobson, Mrs. Henry Miller, Mrs. Donald Jacobson and Mrs. Gilman Miller. Mrs. Albert Moen, national treasurer, gave a report, "Where Are We?"

Election of officers was as follows: president, Mrs. Vernon Nelson, Grand Forks; vice-president, Miss Pearl Aanstad, Hampden; secretary, Mrs. Albin Haugen, Kloten; and treasurer, Mrs. A. L. Skon-

nard, Valley City.

Mrs. Reuben Ivesdal, Edmore, closed the session with prayer.

After the dinner served in church, we began again with a hymn sing. Mrs. Albin Haugen gave devotions. The ladies from Valley City sang another duet, and Mr. Julian Harstad, Cummings, sang a solo. Pastor John Abel, missions director of the Association, spoke on mission opportunities in Brazil. He gave us a challenge to the open doors in South America and spoke of the willingness of the people there to accept Christianity.

The new officers were installed by the host pastor, Raynard Huglen. A processional offering amounted to \$275. We have thankful hearts to God for this, for the beautiful day, and the blessings which we all received.

Mrs. Albin Haugen, Secretary



Part of the group of women who attended the WMF district meeting at Ny Stavanger Church in Buxton, N. Dak.



Pastor Raynard Huglen installed the officers of the Eastern North Dakota District in a candlelighting ceremony.



Members of the Planning Committee for the WMF meeting of the Eastern North Dakota District. —Photos by John Abel

BIBLE VERSES

"A voice cries:

'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' —Isaiah 40:3-5



EDITORIALS

THOSE GIVING STATISTICS

Elsewhere in this paper you will find a report on giving among all major Lutheran bodies in 1963.

There is some comfort for Lutheran churches in the statistics. For example, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod led all the large Protestant denominations in average contributions for all purposes, and six of the seven reporting bodies bettered the average in giving for all purposes, for congregational expenses, and for benevolences.

On the other hand, there is an uncomfortable feeling created by learning that some smaller Protestant bodies surpass our best by two and three times. Their statistics no doubt are not based on as much "dead wood" as Lutheran churches are wont to include. And perhaps they do not take into consideration so many younger members as our confirmed membership does. But all this being so, these churches have members who are giving in a way that puts many of us to shame.

Naturally, those of us from the Lutheran Free Church have a measure of pride in her ranking among the Lutheran churches. She was third in per-member contributions for all purposes and congregational expenses (that surprised us); fourth in benevolences (we thought it would be higher); and second in foreign missions. It all indicates that we weren't doing too badly from man's viewpoint. What it was from the Lord's point of view is another matter.

It would be good if we become disturbed about the benevolence and foreign mission contributions. Having had something to do with raising money for benevolences, we know that reaching a \$15-\$20 average gift is no small achievement. But the figures do not look large when you see them on paper nor does even a second-place \$3.10 for world missions. It indicates that for many, world evangelization and charity in the name of Christ can wait for a while at least.

And in the meantime, we of the Association await with considerable interest our place of rank when we finally have some reliable statistics. God help us that we do not shame Him by doing even less than our brethren.

LUTHER LEAGUE CONVENTION TURNS OUT WELL

A rather complete account of the first Luther League convention is to be found in this issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador*. The write-up by the new secretary describes the convention as a busy one for the large number which attended it.

Over two hundred young people were at the gathering, in addition to adults. They came from most of our parishes, from independent Lutheran congregations, and from other Lutheran churches. These youth revealed considerable talent in the area of music. The Friday night service showed this and it was thoroughly enjoyable. A number of testimonies were given—some planned, some spontaneous. They were warm-hearted statements of thanksgiving for God's grace and concern for other youth.

All in all, it was much like other Luther League conventions we were used to. Opportunities were given for commitment. We have always believed in that, and the findings of Lutheran Youth Research indicate that many Lutheran young people are not sure of their faith and lack assurance. So it is right that they be challenged to throw their lot wholly with the Lord.

It is easy to get carried away in evangelism, however, and to seemingly deny Lutheran doctrine in the process. Therefore, we were grateful for President Strand's message at the banquet Saturday night. He pointed out the great gift of God in baptism, how it may be retained, but, if it is lost, how it may be reclaimed. We needn't say this in every sermon we preach, but it ought always to be in mind and every now and then stated.

One criticism of the convention which came directly to us was that the young people were not asked concerning their problems or what they were thinking so that concrete help could be given them. There is validity to this criticism and we pass it on to the Youth Committee and the new Executive Committee. But, without having consulted either committee about this, we say in defense of the former (those who planned this conference) that this was a short convention and it got the ball rolling, so to speak, and couldn't do everything that future conventions will be able to do.

As we've said before, there are questions in our Association about youth work. Discussions are going on regarding the context of youth work in our fellowship. We are concerned about making the most wholesome approach to the spiritual problems of young people. But surely it is encouraging to see the large number of fine young people we have in our churches and their talents and apparent willingness to use them for the Lord. The presence of these youth at Fargo and in our Association is a cause for gratitude to God, and we must pray for wisdom to conserve by right use this great resource.

THERE'LL BE A CHANGE

In our Christmas issue, the next one to reach you, we will, God-willing, increase the size of *The Lutheran Ambassador* to sixteen pages.

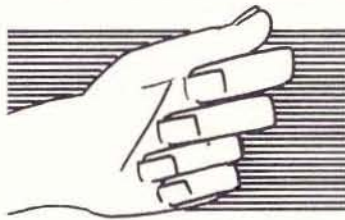
We really intended to do so before, but one thing and another has prevented that. Now we are settled permanently (as much as a pastor can be) in our new home in Roslyn, S. Dak., and hope to have a little better control of the situation. With more material coming in from the committees of our church and hoping to share other good things with you, we will be giving you more reading than before.

In mid-March we expect to begin a series of articles concerning neo-orthodoxy and one of its

fellow travellers, the theory of evolution. The presentations will be written by a man who we think is capable of dealing with the topic. Perhaps you would like to send a gift subscription now to someone who would be interested in following this series.

In our next issue we will have the first Bible study for the women of our church through the program of the Women's Missionary Federation. This will come in plenty of time to be used for January meetings of the ladies' groups.

And in the last issue of the year, Dec. 31, you'll find the questionnaire we promised you. Then you can rate your paper and give us suggestions for improvement.



STEWARDSHIP

ALL THAT I HAVE
IS THINE ALONE

ONE ACCORD

"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2: 46).

The first Christian congregation, located in Jerusalem, will for all time remain a model. The spirit of brotherhood there is what present-day churches are longing after. It is said of these Jerusalem Christians that with "one accord" they continued in prayer and fellowship. The words "with one accord" express the unity they lived in and true unity is the missing link in many congregations.

But the words "one accord" are beautiful and meaningful. When a choir brings in the various parts at the right time, there is accord. When an organist plays the various parts properly there is accord. When Christians pray and worship together in His vineyard because they love Jesus and one another, there is accord—"one accord."

Let us note that "one accord" does not denote monotony. No, it is

the various parts blended in singing, instrumental music, and any kind of Christian work, that make for "one accord." A score of men and women, each of whom is a monotone, could not sing with "one accord." It is the relationship between the various parts that determines the outcome; the one part complements the other. This was the spiritual condition of that first congregation.

And this is the way it should be today. All Christians have the same Savior, the same task and the same heaven. God wants this congregation on earth to be a spiritual home where battling pilgrims can find food, fellowship, and encouragement for continuing the journey toward heaven. For this reason it is exceedingly dangerous to damage that "one accord" in a church. For where that accord is destroyed, discord takes over. To cause this is sin against both man and God.

How blessed is that love which causes God's children to live in one accord. I have seen this demonstrated particularly at prayer meetings; the meeting was dismissed

but people were in no hurry to go home, for an unseen hand—the pierced hand of Jesus Christ—drew them together in a foretaste of heavenly peace and joy.

This was also the secret of a rich Christian fellowship in Jerusalem. We do not necessarily have Christian homes nor Christian fellowship anywhere just because Christians are present. The Jerusalem Christians experienced that "one accord" because they both *believed* and *practiced* what the Scriptures taught.

Now we do not lack any of God's gifts, but what will it avail unless we hold fast to them? If we say that conditions have changed since Acts 2:46 was written, let us not overlook that these children of God had their difficulties also. Satan was just as active and cunning then; human enemies were at work. But these difficulties were the reason they found it so needful to hold fast to God's gifts. Had there been no thieves trying to steal, the Christians would not have needed to hold fast to their spiritual possessions.

The Jerusalem Christians were not numerically strong, they were not financially strong; but the mighty, gentle hand of the Savior caused them to "continue daily with one accord" in His will and work. And how miraculously God used them!

I believe we can say with humil-

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National Conference of Free Lutheran Youth

"Christ has set us free!"

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1). This verse was the theme for the National Conference of Free Lutheran Youth held in Fargo, N. Dak., November 8-10. Rev. John Abel, Missions Director of the AFLC, was the host pastor. Attendance was above expectation. How wonderful it was to see so many youth gathered in one place with the purpose of glorifying Christ's name. Sharing the joyous news of salvation with others right around us was impressed upon our hearts as we met together for times of song and testimony and heard messages from God's Word.

The conference began Friday at 6:30 p.m. with registration, Marlys Haakonson, as chairman. At 7:45 p.m. there was a song and testimony rally led by Rev. Jay Erickson of Faith, S. Dak. A welcome was extended to all by Rev. John Abel, followed by a presentation of top teen talent from many of our Free Lutheran congregations. Also some testimonies were heard from young people praising God for "setting them free." About 250 people attended this service.

A singspiration led by Gary Skramstad of Grand Forks, N. Dak., started off the day on Saturday. This was only one of many held throughout the weekend giving opportunity for all to share with others what the Lord had done for them.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). Rev. John Strand, president of the AFLC, led us in a Bible study on this verse. A few of the points brought out as we discussed this verse in buzz sessions were: (1) The kingdom is within us—our own

spiritual life. (2) The kingdom is a feast—something we can enjoy and gather strength from. (3) The kingdom is like a treasure or a priceless pearl. (4) The kingdom is a tremendous success story. We were challenged with the question, "Do you believe what God says to you?" "Do you only believe in God or do you also believe what He says?"

At 11:00 a.m. the business meeting of the National Conference of Free Lutheran Youth was held with Francis Monseth of Valley City, N. Dak., as temporary chairman. At this meeting the resolutions were read by Darrell Moe of Grafton, N. Dak. During the discussion it was brought out that it would be commendable if the whole Sunday on Youth Sunday would be dedicated to youth, with services put on by them and a rally or special service during the day. Also it would be desirable to have more than one service during the year.

At this time the slate of nominees was read and accepted. The new officers are: president, Rev. Richard Snipstead, Greenbush, Minn.; first vice-president, Francis Monseth, Valley City; second vice-president, Bonnie Quam, McIntosh, Minn.; secretary, Janet Aasness, Doran, Minn.; treasurer, JoAnn Broden, Fertile, Minn.; and devotional life secretary, Karen Moe, Thief River Falls, Minn. A committee was formed to set up a constitution to be read at the 1964 Youth Conference. The members are Tom Pederson, McIntosh, Minn.; Marlys Haakonson, Moorhead, Minn.; and Mrs. Bob Reith of Tioga, N. Dak. Also, goals for the future work of the youth organization were discussed.

Saturday afternoon activities included a singspiration led by Bob Lee of Grand Forks, N. Dak., followed by a message on youth and

missions by Rev. John Abel. Darrell Moe, Youth Commission member, presented youth programs and materials, which concluded in a period of open discussion.

In their desire to share with others conference blessings and present a witness for their Lord and Savior, several young people went into the neighborhood and invited people to the morning service and youth rally on Sunday, after the closing session on Saturday afternoon. This was something they could do right then and there to further the cause of missions.

The banquet, one of the highlights of the conference, was held in the Town Hall Room of the Gardner Hotel with Alan Hendrickson of Negaunee, Mich., as master of ceremonies. Music was provided by the Maple Bay Girls' Chorus of Winger, Minn.; Dewayne Herbrandson of Ceylon, Minn., with a vocal solo, and Roger Strom of Elbow Lake, Minn., presenting a trumpet solo. Again, we heard a message from Rev. John Strand, president of the AFLC, on our "garments of baptism" and what tragedy lies in casting off these garments. Nearly 300 persons attended the banquet. At 8:00 the "Tony Fontane Story" was shown, presenting the life and conversion of a popular singing personality through his near death in an auto accident. His life and voice were surrendered to the Lord, and his commitment was deepened as his wife Kerry was miraculously healed of cancer. Music was provided by the Ambassadors Youth Caravan.

Terry Simonson, of Minneapolis, Minn., led us in a praise and prayer hour on Sunday morning, which preceded a Bible hour with Verle Dean of Willmar, Minn. Mr. Dean, head of Youth for Christ at Willmar, challenged us with a clear-cut, heart-searching message of salva-

tion and surrender to the Lord. Speaker for the morning service was Rev. Richard Snipstead, Greenbush, Minn., secretary of the Association. Also at this service, the new national Luther League officers were installed. Special music was presented by the conference choir under the direction of Victor Svanoe of Minneapolis, Mrs. Bob Reith on the marimba, and Dave Johnson of Bloomington, Minn., on the French horn.

The closing youth rally began with music from the conference choir, the Linder sisters trio of Fargo, and the Ambassadors. Rev. Molstre of Winger, Minn., stressed to us the danger of our own foolish human pride and how it must be broken by surrendering to the Lord Jesus Christ. Only then can the chains fall off and we can be "set free." Following Rev. Molstre's message, we experienced a wonderful time of listening to and sharing with others the work of the Lord in various hearts and lives. One after the other was eager to testify of His mercy and love toward each of them. As the invitation was extended to those who wanted to accept Christ as Savior, several indicated their desire to be remembered in prayer as they made this life-changing decision. We left the closing rally with a spirit of thankfulness and praise to the Lord for the moving of His Spirit among these youth and for the marvelous fact that "Christ has set us free."

Much time, preparation, and hard work went into planning and serving the delicious meals at the convention, and many thanks go to those who undertook this big job. The Fargoan, Powers and Gardner Hotels provided lodging, and transportation was provided by bus to the various sessions.

There are many people who helped in making the conference a success and we can't begin to name them. Of course, it was truly a success in that the Lord Jesus Christ was the center of all activities. We pray that He will continue to raise up youth in dedi-

cated service to His Kingdom.

Janet Aasness, Secretary

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ity and rejoicing that we have experienced much of the "one accord" which was the secret of blessing and power in the Jerusalem church. We have come from conventions, conferences, and board meetings with praise in our hearts because the Lord had been present to lead His flock. And He only could have accomplished all that has been done in the year that is now past. We have far to go and much to learn, as did the Christians in Jerusalem, but our God has not changed. He will create free and living congregations. He will remind His people of the financial and spiritual needs.

As our congregations move forward unitedly, as Christians join hearts, praying, studying, working, and providing resources for establishing a seminary, congregations and missions, we shall surely experience the Spirit's blessings as did the Jerusalem church.

We have come to see that the church's great need today is to go back about 2,000 years, back to the program given by God: "But ye shall receive power...and ye shall be witnesses unto me."

May these words be our guide to the future, as the nail-scarred hands of Jesus Christ show the way to sacrifice and service for Him.

And we shall go forward with *one accord*.

Pastor Karl Stendal

\$70 TO \$100 PER MEMBER GIVEN BY LUTHERANS IN SEVEN BODIES

New York (NLC) — Seven Lutheran church bodies ranked from 18th to 31st in giving for all purposes last year among 42 denominations in the United States, it was reported here by the Department of Stewardship and Benevolence of the National Council of Churches.

A statistical summary issued by the NCCUSA department showed an average per-member contribution of \$68.76 for all causes in 1962, a decrease of 0.35 percent over the previous year, among the bodies that submitted figures.

In 18th place, as it was last year, and still first among denominations with a million or more members, was the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. It had an average contribution of \$100.66, compared to \$100.51 in 1961.

The Free Methodist Church, a 52,535-member body, led all the denominations reporting with \$312.58, followed by the 37,753-member Wesleyan Methodist Church with \$246.40 and the 40,375-member Evangelical Free Church with \$222.49.

Contributions reported by the Protestant bodies covered in the National Council's survey totaled a record \$2,799,670,577. Of this amount, \$2,292,731,491, or 81.89 percent, was earmarked for congregational expenditures, and \$506,939,086, or 18.11 percent, for benevolences, including home and foreign missions.

Per-member giving for congregational expenses in the 42 church bodies was \$57.18, an increase of 2.03 percent. For all benevolences, the per-member figure was \$12.45, a decrease of 3.9 percent. The latter included a per-member gift for foreign missions of \$2.18 for 1962, a loss of 1.4 percent.

The Rev. T. K. Thompson, executive director of the NCC's Stewardship Department, said the percentage decreases in per-member giving were attributable to an increase in total membership without a corresponding increase in dollars contributed. He noted that a large part of this was due to denominational mergers and a consequent change in reporting procedures.

Four of the churches reporting a year ago are now merged in the Lutheran Church in America—the United Lutheran Church, Augustana Lutheran Church, Suomi Synod, and American Evangelical Lu-

The Lutheran Ambassador

theran Church. The LCA ranked 21st in per-member contributions for all purposes with \$84.98.

Third in this category among Lutherans, and 23rd in relation to the other Protestant bodies reporting, was the Lutheran Free Church with \$78.68.

All seven Lutheran bodies reporting exceeded the average in giving for all purposes, six bettered the average for congregational expenses and for benevolences, but only two surpassed the average in gifts to foreign missions.

In addition to being first among the Lutheran bodies in total giving, the Missouri Synod led in contributions for benevolences, with \$21.99, and in giving for congregational expenses with \$78.67. The LCA was second in the latter category, with \$71.38.

The Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches was first in gifts for foreign missions, with \$3.43 per member, replacing the Lutheran Free Church, which reported an average of \$3.10.

Lutheran per-member contributions for the various categories were:

All purposes: Missouri Synod, 18th, \$100.66; Lutheran Church in America, 21st, \$84.98; Lutheran Free Church, 23rd, \$78.68; Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 25th, \$76.68; Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Church, 26th, \$74.77; American Lutheran Church, 30th, \$72.47; and Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, 31st, \$70.76.

Congregational expenses: Missouri Synod, \$78.67; LCA, \$71.38; LFC, \$63.19; SELC, \$62.56; ALC, \$58.83; ELS, \$58.80; and Wisconsin, \$56.75.

Benevolences: Missouri Synod, \$21.99; Wisconsin, \$18.02; ELS, \$17.88; LFC, \$15.48; ALC, \$13.64; LCA, \$13.60; and SELC, \$8.19.

Foreign Missions: SELC, \$3.43; LFC, \$3.10; LCA, \$2.12; Wisconsin, \$1.98; ALC, \$1.96; Mo. Synod, \$1.84; and ELS, \$0.53.

Five Lutheran bodies, ranging in size from 1,500 to 12,500 members, did not participate in the National Council survey.

PASTOR AND MRS. HOKONSON HONORED

Sunday afternoon, October 20, Pastor and Mrs. Arvid Hokonson of the Calvary Lutheran Free Church, Everett, Washington, celebrated their silver wedding anniversary at the church. Approximately 200 friends and members of the congregation were present to greet the honored couple.

A short program was held in the church auditorium and Harold Mickelsen, president of the congregation, acted as master of ceremonies.

Pastor E. P. Dreyer, of Ferndale, led in the devotions and Mrs. George Alf sang a solo.

Then greetings were brought by Dr. Robert Brown of the Evangelical ministerial association, Edwin Boersma of the Rescue Mission, Harold Mickelsen for the Bethany Home, Mrs. J. Halverson for the Salvation Army, and Pastor E. P. Dreyer for the church in Ferndale.

Mrs. Robert Braaten gave a review of the romance and wedding of the honored couple and brought to light many humorous and serious side lights of the young ministerial couple as they embarked on their life's work.

Steve Hokonson, son of the honored couple, then sang a solo accompanied by his mother.

Pastor and Mrs. Hokonson were presented with a wishing well, decorated in silver, which was filled with gifts and cards from well-wishers. They both graciously thanked the congregation and friends for the honor bestowed on them, and Pastor Hokonson said he would say the same thing he said the night of his wedding reception when he was called on to speak, "I am very glad to be here tonight."

After the program everyone was ushered to the church parlors where refreshments were served, and the rest of the time was spent in a social gathering.

—Corr.

[Continued from page 3]

Jesus is Lord. The high and the mighty shall tremble at His presence; yes, they shall seek for a hiding place. They shall cry, as the Scripture says, "calling to the mountains and the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb'" (Rev. 6:16, RSV).

The child of God can say with John, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Despite the frightening destruction, we shall be safe in the arms of Jesus. He will in that day take us to the eternal heaven which shall never pass away. We shall then be citizens of the New Jerusalem which abideth forever. John writes in Revelation 21:3, 4: "And I heard a great voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away'" (RSV).

This gives us just a glimpse of what is in store for the person who trusts in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. But before this becomes a reality to us, we must come to Jesus acknowledging all our sins, honestly confessing them to Him and earnestly seeking God's grace in Christ. Then the Holy Spirit does His marvelous work by giving us the assurance that our sins are forgiven and that we are His children. We can say with the Apostle Paul, "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain." "My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better."

Again we say in this Advent season, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

"And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus'" (Luke 1:30, 31).



Edited by Mrs. David C. Hanson

THE SYMBOLS OF CHRISTMAS

OVER 1900 years ago, on a quiet hillside near Bethlehem, the angels of heaven announced the birth of Christ with the words that have become so familiar. "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." At the heart of the message is the thought "Born... a Savior." In fulfillment of the promise of God, Jesus Christ became man to redeem sinners...in the shadow of the cradle stands the cross.

Experience has taught that many of the children and young people in our congregations have a very limited understanding of the Christmas story. Their thoughts are so centered on the Babe in the manger that there is little realization that God the Son has always existed, and that His only purpose in coming to earth as an infant was the redemption of mankind. Without this emphasis the story of Christmas has lost its meaning.

Surely a knowledge of the prophecies concerning the Messiah as they are found in the Old Testament would help to broaden understanding. With teaching time so limited, we might want to emphasize the prophecies as we decorate for Christmas; and, in that way, help our students to understand that many of the things the world has chosen to symbolize this holiday have a deeper meaning in Scripture.

CHRISTMAS CANDLES

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined" (Isa. 9:2). Since the beginning of time when God said, "Let there be light," these words have been the key to God's plan for men.



Through all the years of Old Testament history, He revealed more and more light through His prophets as they told of the Messiah. All their words were fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ, "the Light of the world."



THE CHRISTMAS TREE

"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land" (Jer. 23:5). Tradition says that Martin Luther was first to use the evergreen as a Christmas tree, but

Jeremiah, who lived hundreds of years before Christ was born, used the word Branch to describe the Messiah and tell us that He would be a descendant of King David.



THE STAR

"A star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel" (Num. 24:17).

The fourth book of Moses refers to the Messiah as a Star and a Scepter, denoting that He would be an eminent ruler. In the light of the Old

Testament prophecy it seems fitting that God should hang a new star in the sky to announce the birth of the Savior.

THE CRADLE AND THE CROSS

"But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days" (Micah 5:2).

"Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14).

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:5, 6).



God used the prophet Micah to tell the world that the Savior would be born in Bethlehem. Even though Isaiah lived seven hundred years before our Lord Jesus, he wrote much about the person and the mission of the Messiah. It was Isaiah who prophesied the virgin birth and also the death of the Christ who was to come.

There is no better time to teach than Christmas time. The holiday has a mystic quality all its own that permeates the air and fills the hearts of men with love. Let us be certain, then, that we are "making the most of the time" with every aspect of our work pointing to Christ the Savior.

The symbols, as they have been illustrated, could also be used as visual aids for a series of worship services using one symbol each Sunday.

1. Enlarge the symbols and cut them from construc-

- tion paper. Suggested colors: star—yellow; tree—green (decorate as you see fit); candle—red with a yellow flame and a green candlestick; cradle—purple with a yellow radiance and a black cross.
2. Use rubber cement to glue flannel to the back of the symbols.
 3. Choose suitable hymns for each Sunday. "Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne" would be a good hymn to memorize.
 4. Assign the Scripture readings to the young people a week ahead of time so they can take part in the service.

Add a symbol to the flannelboard each week until the series is completed. Be sure to review each Sunday. It would be simple to find additional material on each of these symbols if you would like to lengthen the worship service.

PERSONALITIES

Rev. Ernest J. Langness, AFLC, formerly of Leroy, Saskatchewan, has moved to McVille, N. Dak., where he will serve New Luther Valley Church of that town, Bethany in Binford and Norway, rural Aneta.

Mr. Gene Sundby, who served at the Redby (Minn.) Indian Mission, is now living in Newfolden, Minn., taking care of Westaker and Bethania Churches of Newfolden and Hegland Church, Karlstad.

Rev. G. Spletstoesser, Pine River, Minn., superintendent of two Good Samaritan homes in that area, has been accepted into the fellowship of the AFLC on a probationary basis.

Rev. Robert Krueger, Kenwood Lutheran Church in Duluth, will become the new pastor of Kingo Lutheran Church in Fosston, Minnesota.

Rev. Daniel Faust has moved from Saskatoon, Sask., to Preeceville, of that same province.

Rev. L. Warren Hansen, formerly of Portland, Ore., has taken up residence near Silverdale, Wash. (Route 1), where he will serve a congregation.

Rev. John O. Johanson, recently of Dalton, Minn., is now living in De Lamere, N. Dak., and serving two churches.

NOTICE

Our business office is located at:

**The Lutheran Ambassador
Box 652
Grafton, N. Dak.**

Please send all subscriptions and inquiries concerning mailing lists to that office.

All comments and questions concerning material published in the paper should be addressed to:

**Rev. Raynard Huglen, Ed.
The Lutheran Ambassador
Roslyn, S. Dak.**

All subscriptions will be handled as promptly as possible. Please allow 2-3 weeks for the filling of your subscription. The price is \$2.50 per year (25 issues).

NOTICE OF PASTORAL CONFERENCE

A conference for pastors and laymen serving churches in the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations will be held in the Zion Lutheran Church, Tioga, N. Dak., Rev. John P. Strand, pastor, January 6-8, 1964.

Notice of program and housing arrangements will be supplied later.

Raynard Huglen, Chairman
Fritjof B. Monseth

"I, I am he
who blots out your transgressions for my own sake,
and I will not remember your sins."
—Isaiah 43:25

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.

"Fear not, for I am with you,
be not dismayed, for I am your God;

I will strengthen you, I will help you,

I will uphold you with my victorious right hand."

—Isaiah 41:10

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY

The news of the tragic death of the President came after the copy for this issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* was prepared. However, we are able to make this insertion before going to press.

With all Americans (except for a few incorrigible fanatics) and a great portion of the world's population, we lament the assassination of our President. We bow in shame before the fact that one of our fellow citizens should become so distorted in his thinking as to imagine that taking the life of someone with whom he differed would solve anything. We regret the fear- and hate-infiltrated society which propelled the unstable assassin to an act from which he would not turn and which also drove his own slayer to a deed for which he may well pay with his own life.

President Kennedy was a greatly gifted man. The youngest man ever elected to the presidency, he had not yet reached the zenith of his career. And now we will never know what contributions he could also have made to his nation after his White House years.

The Lutheran Ambassador extends its sincere condolences to Mrs. Kennedy, her children, and the whole family—a family that has been a good example to us all in devotion and affection.

The Editor

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INFORMATION REGARDING RENEWALS

We are rapidly approaching our first anniversary of publication.

There will be some problems this first year in establishing congregational lists of subscribers. Some of the congregations did send in a complete list of members and in such cases there will be no problem. But from others, subscriptions were made in several groups or individually. We are anxious to draw up lists for all congregations of the Association.

Here are instructions to follow regarding renewals for congregations:

1. Shortly after the first of the year the pastor (or a lay person, in the case of a vacancy) will receive a list of all present subscribers in the area served by his parish and also the original orders sent in by

the congregation(s).

2. From these lists you are to draw up a new list for each congregation and, where it hasn't been done, a complete list.

3. Send this new list together with the lists received from the office to *The Lutheran Ambassador*, Box 652, Grafton, N. Dak.

4. Send no remittance at that time. You will be billed later with allowances being made for unexpired subscriptions. Where individuals have money coming for unexpired subscriptions, this will be applied toward the congregation's bill. This is the only way we can do it.

5. Should you receive some names which cannot be placed in your group plan, please indicate such names to us when you return

the lists and they will be handled as individual subscribers.

6. There is no reduced rate in effect for group subscriptions yet. All subscriptions will be billed at the rate of \$2.50 per year.

Thank you for your attention. Please follow the instructions. If this can be handled correctly now, our problems will be greatly lessened next year.

Please note: If you belong to an Association congregation and subscribed personally last winter or spring, *please do not send in a renewal personally now. Send it through your congregational plan.*

A word about renewals for individual subscribers will come in a future issue.

—The Editor