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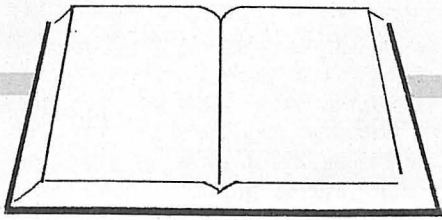
No. 3

LUTHERAN

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OUR PRESIDENT
PASTOR JOHN STRAND



According to the Word

Labor and Pray

“And we prayed to our God, and set a guard as a protection against them day and night” (Neh. 4:9).

When Nehemiah and his compatriots were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem after the exile, under the blessing of Artaxerxes the king, they were not without enemies. Men such as Sanballat and Tobiah heckled them by calling them “feeble Jews” and saying “if a fox goes up on it he will break down their stone wall.” They went further and threatened to hold them back from their work by force.

The builders were men not to be denied, however. We are told that “the people had a mind to work.” They took two precautions to guarantee their success. For one thing, they prayed to God, but they also set an around-the-clock guard against their enemies—and they worked.

We are reminded of what someone said—I don’t remember who—about how we should pray as though we had not done any work or made any preparations and then work and prepare as though we had not prayed at all.

Successful Christian living and true sanctification are made up of both prayer and labor. The temptation is constant to gravitate to an extreme position either way. On the one hand, one may become an “activist,” a doer of many good works but without sufficient de-

votional life. Martha of Bethany had a tendency toward this extreme. The gentle rebuke of Jesus, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things. One thing is needful,” may have been enough to awaken her to her danger. If activism goes too far, it ends up as Phariseism or self-righteousness. Salvation is seen as the product of good works, not the cause of them.

The other error is to fall into a kind of “quietism” in which contemplation, meditation, and devotional life occupy the mind so much that many good deeds are left undone.

There is a little story that somewhat illustrates this second danger. As I recall it, it is about a group of people who gathered in their church to pray for a needy family in the congregation. The prayer session was disturbed later by a boy, the son of a man who really ought to have been at the meeting, too. He was pulling a wagon and announced, “I have brought my father’s prayers.” “What do you mean, ‘your father’s prayers?’” they asked him. “Well, Father was busy tonight and couldn’t come to the meeting, so he sent me over with his prayers.” At this the group noticed the contents of the wagon—flour, potatoes, and so on.

Quietism lays itself open to the charge of James, “So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.”

It must have been in Paul’s mind when he wrote, “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels. . . if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries . . . if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.” It, too, can become self-righteousness.

Toward which side do you tend to go?

A combination of both quietness and activity, of prayer and labor, is needed. Pious words will not clothe the poor or ease the pangs of hunger. Great activity, on the other hand, which does not come out of personal faith in Christ and quietness with Him will be a beating of the air and will not carry His blessing.

The devotional life consists of the pauses which refresh and strengthen the Christian for the journey. In prayer, in the Scriptures, in meditation, the orders for the day are received and the power to act is obtained.

Good works ought to follow and proceed from a living faith and the quiet time even as Jesus rose from prayer to do His Father’s work. Faith will wither and dry up if it is not exercised by good deeds done in the Master’s name.

Labor and prayer. The earnest Christian will see the need for each. To neglect one or the other is fatal.

—Raynard Huglen

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OUR PRESIDENT WRITES

by PASTOR JOHN STRAND

HE LOVED THE CHURCH

We are in the Lenten season—our thoughts are focused on Christ's suffering and death for us as humanity and as individuals. We often wonder why He would do it for such as we. Ephesians 5:25-27 tells us that Christ not only gave himself for us as humanity, and as individuals, but that He also gave himself for the Church. "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

There was a definite reason for this giving. He gave himself so that He might sanctify her, . . . that the church might be presented before him in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish."

We are very concerned about the Church. When we say "church," we do not mean a particular congregation only, nor a particular denomination only. We mean the Church Universal, which knows no boundaries of denomination, geography, or time. All is not well with the Church. Her spiritual power seems weak in the presence of her enemies: the devil, the world, and our flesh. Men are speaking of the "post-Christian era," and some say we are entering it now. From now on, the Church will enjoy a lessening influence on history. She has had her golden years, many say; and developments seem to indicate that they are correct.

Yet the Church is glorious. "Most wondrous is of all on earth, the Kingdom Jesus founded." She still has the means of grace—the Word and Sacraments—without which men can know no salvation. In the Church we have received these means of grace which are so dear to us. All of our most precious experiences on earth are linked with the Church. Our hope for the future, both on earth and in eternity, is linked with the Church.

Do we love the Church? That is a question we must face. Do we love her enough to strive for her sanctification that the holiness she has through Christ and the Spirit might become apparent to all men? This demands that we as individuals be more consecrated, for the Church reflects to the world what we are, in a real way. The Church, as far as the world is concerned, is no better than her members. The Church will not appear holy unless we appear holy. Our sins hurt the Church!

The difference between the believer and the unbeliever was very apparent in the early church. How God impressed that church concerning the tragedy of personal sin when Ananias and Sapphira died after telling a lie. That was a mighty church; sin was real—and forsaken. Sins as precious as one's arms or eyes were to be cast away; the spirit of compromise was not tolerated.

If we love the Church, we will do more than cleanse our lives of what is forbidden or is ques-

tionable. If we love the Church, we will be *more* concerned to build the Church, obeying our Lord's mission command.

"What would the Church be if every member were just like me?" was a question which stared me in the face as I entered a church at one time. It really stopped me.

"Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." Have you given yourself up for her? The conception of sacrifice for Christ and His Church that most people have today perhaps explains the Church's failure. An easy religion is what is wanted instead of a challenging and demanding faith.

We are concerned for the Church. We have launched out, not for "the fun of it," not because of personal pride, as some would suggest, but because we would see the Church reach a greater degree of sanctification in the eyes of the world. But unless our concern and love is seen by what we do about personal sins, and how we use our time, talents, and treasures, we are nothing but clouds without water.

How happy I am that so many have come to us, willing to spend much time and to give of their talents. How happy, too, that many have given of their gifts. And this must continue. The fields are white. We need the prayerful, loving support of all. If you are with us, come all the way. Be definite in your praying. Be willing in your serving. Be sacrificial and regular in your giving. Give proof of your love!

WOMEN *for Christ*

WILL YE ALSO GO AWAY?

"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?" (John 6:67). It was a tense moment for the twelve. There stood Jesus, and one by one the disciples turned their backs upon Him and walked away. Then came the question from Jesus to the twelve who were left alone with Him, "Will ye also go away?" They could go if they wanted to. The opportunity was present, either to go or to remain, but it was their own choice.

Previous to this incident, Jesus had fed the five thousand and had declared, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven." Many of His disciples had then been offended and said, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" And they walked away, and it says they went back and walked no more with Him. It was then He turned to the twelve and said, "Will ye also go away?"

Here there was a division, and it was among the disciples of Jesus. What caused it? What was the deciding factor? Was it not Jesus? Was it not because Jesus claimed to be divine and that He lived by the Father and said, "Likewise, ye shall live by Me"?

Peter and the eleven may have pondered the same question: Shall we follow the rest? Shall we give it up? But the thought of going away gave rise to other questions: To whom shall we go? To this lifeless formalism? To the wretched

traditions of men? No, there is no hope in it. So Peter spoke for all: "To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

Perhaps no time in our lives has this question been as real and as serious as today. Perhaps it has never been so complicated either. And the choice we make may determine our future destiny. For the temptations are so subtle. Our faith may be put in jeopardy over confusing spirits and tongues, over teachings, over methods of work in church and schools. The self life is being exalted and encouraged and we know not that this is to go away from Jesus. Nor do we give it a thought that there is no eternal life in it. To whom shall we go? We MUST go back to Jesus. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

We who want to continue as a woman's missionary organization have chosen "Salvation Made Plain" as our Bible study for this year in our ladies aids. This course is 75 cents if 7 courses each with answers are ordered. Or if you'd rather study a book of the Bible, we suggest the study of the book of Acts, which is \$2.00 per book with the answers included. If five

or more books are ordered at a time, they may be had at \$1.50 each. These study guides may be obtained from the Lutheran Bible Institute, 6125 Olson Highway, Minneapolis 22, Minn.

The choice of the study and the ordering of the same is left up to each ladies aid. We would advise that you choose someone in your ladies aid to be the leader of this study. It should be someone who knows the way of salvation; then let it be the quest of each member to seek the Lord for the way, the truth, and the life.

Mrs. O. K. Ose

THE WORD MADE FLESH

O Word made flesh! A tender plant
Out of a dry ground springing,
When Thou wert found in Bethle-
hem
Men heard the angels singing.

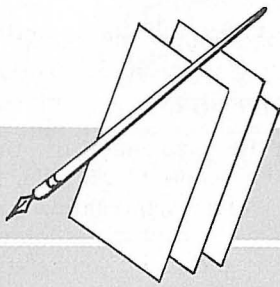
O Root of David! Wise men came
With off'rings to adore Thee:
Soon all the world shall own Thee,
Lord,
And kings fall down before Thee.

Seed of the Woman! Virgin-born
In Thine own world a stranger,
By faith we see Thee on the Throne
Who once wast in a manger.

True Vine of God! Thy virtues flow
From Paradise supernal,
Through branches that abide in
Thee
With fruit to Life Eternal!

F. W. Pitt
(from *The King's Business*)

"And He said, 'With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.'"—Mark 4:30-32



EDITORIALS

THE MAN ON THE COVER

Pictured on the cover of *The Lutheran Ambassador* is our first president, Pastor John Strand, Tioga, North Dakota. With an assistant, he serves six congregations in the oil rich Williston Basin, in addition to the growing duties of guiding our struggling, but promising, association of congregations. Previously he served the Lutheran Free Church parish at Grafton, North Dakota.

He was well thought of by the late Dr. T. O. Burnvedt, for many years president of the Lutheran Free Church. At least twice he preached at annual conferences of the Church.

It was only after considerable personal struggle that he made the decision to remain outside the merger. He had much to lose and little to gain in taking the course he did. He did not seek the presidency, but when he was called upon to assume the responsibility, he accepted humbly.

He covets our prayers for the Association and himself. He wrote in our first issue of the encouragement and inspiration he had found among our people. May we have a spirit of unity as we respond to the leadership of Pastor Strand.

AUGSBURG'S NEW PRESIDENT

We believe that Augsburg College has made a good selection in the choice of Oscar A. Anderson as her next president.

When the vacancy occurred in the Augsburg presidency upon the resignation of Dr. Bernhard Christensen, after many years of distinguished service, there was no one clear-cut favorite for the position. This added to the difficulty of the committee charged with securing nominees. Now that a decision has been reached and the acceptance received from Mr. Anderson, we concur in it even though we no longer have a direct voice in the operation of the college.

His family associations and his attendance at Minnehaha Academy, the Lutheran Bible Institute, and Augsburg College for two years (one under President George Sverdrup), indicate that he comes from the background which has characterized the Augsburg constituency and is acquainted with the spirit of the school.

Furthermore, we have reason to believe, as seen

in his ministry as a pastor and a youth leader, that he has not disowned his pietistic beginnings and thrown them off as some have, like Paul shook off the viper from his hand on Malta.

Mr. Anderson is well known as a preacher, and an effective one. In speaking to a pastors' group in Fargo a year ago, he stressed his own conviction regarding the importance of the sermon in the service. He said that every sermon is to be an "event," not an incident or an accident. He told us that preaching must contain a good knowledge of the Bible, it must be preceded by much preparation, meditation and prayer, and its dimensions should extend from God to the lonesomeness of man. His book, *With Him All the Way*, a series of Lenten sermons, is exceptionally fine.

We believe that Mr. Jerome Formo, chairman of the Nominating Committee, did not express himself fully when he was quoted in the Minneapolis *Star* of February 5, in which he pointed to the administrative capability of Mr. Anderson, his ability to work well with other people, and the hope that he will give dynamic leadership to Augsburg's development program. We agree with the importance of all of these, but we trust that the new president was chosen primarily for the spiritual leadership he can give to Augsburg.

It is no secret that some of us have felt that Augsburg was unsure of herself in recent years. It is very difficult to put a finger on the causes for this, but we hope that under Mr. Anderson's guidance Augsburg may reaffirm her stand on the revealed Scriptures, the need for personal, experienced Christianity, and the sending forth of young people to aid in the struggle for free and living congregations, whether as pastors or laity.

True, Augsburg has a bright future. True, she may one day be a university. But these will be hollow achievements if she denies her heritage and the purpose for which she was founded. We are hopeful that Oscar A. Anderson will steer a course which will uphold the dreams and prayers of Augsburg's founders and loyal people.

DID WE READ CORRECTLY?

Once again, if we read the report correctly, and we do consider Willmar Thorkelson of the Minneapolis *Star* reliable, Dr. O. Fredrick Nolde has said something to which we must take exception. As director of the World Council of Churches' commission on international affairs, he reported to the recent annual meeting of the National Lutheran Council in New York.

He expressed concern over the growing "divisiveness" among world powers. He mentioned current tensions between England and France and the United States and Canada. Thus far we will nearly all agree.

But when he also lists the Russian-Chinese split as unfortunate for the cause of world peace and freedom, we must part company with Dr. Nolde.

We have felt that one way out of the present world dilemma is dissension within the Communist camp. Certainly such a situation also carries dangers for the world, but not any more than a strong, united front by the Moscow-Peiping axis. In fact, we would say less of a threat. This contention was further supported by a report in one of our daily papers a few days later that our secretary of state, Dean Rusk, views the struggle between the Soviets and Chinese as a "cause for encouragement about the future of freedom." He also stated that the feuding of these two powers shows that communism, not capitalism, "contains within itself the seeds of its own decay."

We do not think Dr. Nolde spoke for the rank-and-file members of the Lutheran churches about his dismay concerning Russian and Chinese relations. This is not the first time this American churchman has failed to represent the spirit of the majority of the people of the Lutheran Church, of which he is a member.

He did not speak for we who are members of this association, and we say again that we do not believe he spoke for the majority of Lutherans. But the expression of such ideas does real harm to the cause of

freedom in the world. The times call for a united front.

THANK YOU, MCVILLE

It was indeed good to be the recipient of the fine hospitality shown to us by the people of McVille, N. Dak., and the New Luther Valley congregation and her pastor, Hamar Benson, at our recent Bible conference. You did everything you could to make our stay a pleasant one.

We were unable to attend all the conference sessions due to a funeral in our parish. However, upon our arrival at the Wednesday evening service, we were impressed with the warm spirit which prevailed. This was evident again in the morning session Thursday, the last of the conference. The seasons of prayer were refreshing to the soul.

One of the benefits of our association will be the opportunities for this type of small-group fellowship. May we cherish them. But, as we seek to bring out in the devotional today, let us rise from prayer to act and serve for Christ in our local communities and the world or we will have missed the other half of Christian living.

Two of our laymen are sharing their impressions of the conference in this issue of the *Ambassador*. We thank them for their contributions.

Lutherans Gather in Minneapolis for Evangelism Meetings

Four studies in the first eleven chapters of Genesis by Dr. Allen R. Blegen featured the daytime program of the Mid-Winter Conference of the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement held at First Augustana Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minn., Jan. 22-27.

Dr. Blegen, pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Chicago, defended the chapters as history against a growing tendency to consider them "religious myth," that is, expressing religious truth in images which may not picture just the way the results came about. He stated, for example, that the flood in the time of Noah is well attested to by science.

The Chicago pastor said that the dictation theory of the inspiration of the Scriptures is held by hardly anyone today nor does he hold it. He also acknowledged that one can believe that the world is very old

and yet accept Genesis as history.

Saturday of the conference was Youth Day, and approximately 1100 youth gathered at Si Melby Hall on the Augsburg College campus for an interesting and inspirational day.

The Mid-Winter Conference brings together Lutherans from most church bodies who are concerned about evangelism. The Lutheran Evangelistic Movement also conducts a Deeper-Life Conference each summer. For many years the conference has been held at Mission Farms by Medicine Lake, west of Minneapolis. That conference will be held at that location again next summer, if at all possible, even though Mission Farms will no longer cater to the church camp or convention.

"And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey Him?'"—Mark 4:41

NOTICE

Our business office has moved from Tioga, N. Dak., to

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
New Effington, 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).

CHRIST'S GETHSEMANE AND OURS

Pastor E. P. Dreyer, Ferndale, Wash.

It gives me pleasure to be one of the first ones to write a Lenten meditation for our new church publication. For those of us who have been associated with the Lutheran Free Church for a number of years, more or less according to our age, we feel it as a great loss that the Free Church would not continue. May we as individual congregations now be enabled to continue the spirit of the Lutheran Free Church by the grace of Almighty God. Only let us ask God for spirit and wisdom to live it better than before.

When we start our work as individual congregations, working in the vineyard of the Lord, let us first take Jesus as our example. His love for fallen humanity was without any comparison. His pity and compassion for human suffering and pain went far beyond any human understanding. His sacrificial spirit stands out in bold relief in the Scriptures.

Jesus was sitting with His Father in heavenly glory and majesty. But when He saw the lost condition of His chief creation, He was willing to lay aside His divine majesty for the time being and take upon himself the likeness of human flesh and blood. He came into this world to carry out the plan of salvation.

Who can understand or fathom the love that Christ had for fallen man? It was unsurpassed and ever will be. God saw the difference in man from the time he had left the Creator's hand and the shape he was in at the time when Jesus came. Now, we human beings love that which is beautiful and attractive, that which is attractive to the eye. Jesus was quite different. He loved that which was ugly and hideous because He saw the possibility in human lives. Jesus saw deeper than we do. He did not only see the repulsive outside of man, but He saw the twisted and deformed human soul. We can see only one kind of deformity. Christ can see

the inside deformity as well. And of the two the inside must be by far the worst. This twisted humanity Christ came to save. His love for us must have been wonderful; too divine and exalted for us to understand.

Jesus felt sorry for the people. He said they were like sheep not having a shepherd. When we see some of our own suffer, it cuts us to the deepest. We sometimes wish we could take their place, but we are not able to. But Jesus was able to take our place, and He did—the sinless for the sinners. He did not think of himself, only of us. What an example to follow! He did not want to see His creation lost and so He gave himself for our salvation. It was painful for Jesus to face the ordeal. We can understand that by His prayer. "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, howbeit not what I will but what thou wilt." What a wonderful blessing for us that His Father did not answer that prayer. Included in that prayer was Jesus' desire that His Father's will should be done. Just as if He should say, "Father, if it is necessary for the human beings, let Me die." That prayer was answered. Scribes have written about this tragedy and victory—it depends on how you look at it—both in prose and poetry, but they have not begun to do justice to the subject called ATONEMENT. Whenever you read about it, and meditate upon it, it will fill you with gratitude and thankfulness to God for His wonderful love and compassion.

In His struggle for humanity Jesus was left entirely alone. He had struggled with the twelve for some over three years. He had taught them the way of God and how to make the best out of life, but they were slow in grasping the truth of His teaching. And when the time came, they failed. One of them

sold Him for personal gain. Another swore that he did not know Him. They all forsook Him and fled. My dear reader, how would you and I have measured up compared to His disciples? I am sure we would not have been any better. Their failure was another bitter pill for Jesus to swallow. We can almost hear His heart-rending words when He said, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak." He was left alone in the darkest hour. Even His Father seemed to turn away from Him. We wonder why He cried out from the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It seems reasonable to think that the holy and righteous God must of necessity turn away from all sin. Here His own Son carried the sin of the whole world in His body on the cross. It seems reasonable to think that God had to leave His Son for the time being because of the burden of sin. This is also the only time Jesus calls His Father God. Shortly before He died He called Him Father again.

How much are you and I, dear reader, willing to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ? I am reminded of a well-known song that we used to sing, "Am I a soldier of the cross, a follower of the Lamb? And shall I fear to own His cause, and blush to speak His name." The other stanza is more pronounced, "Must I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease, while others fought to win the prize, and sailed through bloody seas?"

Countless human beings have been willing to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Are you and I willing to follow Him?" Oh God, have mercy on us and give us power and grace to follow in the footsteps of Jesus!"

CONFERENCE COMMENTS

On February 12, 13, 14, a Bible Conference was held at the New Luther Valley Church in McVille, North Dakota. It was my privilege to attend the sessions on Wednesday and Thursday. The attendance was very good at these sessions, some people coming several hundred miles and many coming from McVille and the surrounding area. This good attendance is very encouraging and heart-warming as it reveals a desire and hunger in the lives of these people for a time of special fellowship with like-minded Christians around the Word of God and the work of His kingdom. To me those two days were a real mountain-top experience, the kind of experience I do not want to forget soon. My prayer is this, that each one who was there may show forth the fruits of the Spirit, and bring praise and honor and glory to God through Jesus Christ.

In looking back at those two days at McVille and now at the opportunity of writing some of my impressions of the conference, a verse of Scripture comes to me: Acts 20:32, "And now brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

Truly we were challenged and invited by God, through the word of His grace, to be built up and grow in our spiritual life and to possess the inheritance (eternal life) which he gives freely to all who receive and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

The talks on "The Doctrine of The Word," by Pastor C. Satre of Minneapolis, were very thorough and timely. We were impressed with this, that as Christ is the "Word," so also the Bible is God's written Word to us. We cannot believe that Christ is the "Truth" if we do not believe that the Bible is the truth. This is vital in our day of neo-orthodox theology.

The messages on "The Spirit-Filled Life," by Pastor J. Hermuns-

lie of Spicer, Minnesota, gave each one of us a challenge to truly live our daily Christian life in the power of the Holy Spirit. We heard that the Spirit-filled life is a life of growth, not an instantaneous, complete experience, but a daily surrender and yielding to Christ "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

Evangelism was not left out. The evening messages were brought by Pastor H. Molstre of Winger, Minnesota. The call to repentance and faith was clear-cut and strong. Thursday forenoon Pastor E. Langness of Leroy, Saskatchewan, called upon the pastors to "do the work of an evangelist."

In closing the conference, Pastor John Strand told how God is giving evidence of His leading in many ways. He also left with us several prayer requests. The testimonies of faith by Missionary Alfson and his daughter were interesting and enlightening. It is good that this fellowship has opportunities for mission work. "A church without Missions is a church without a Mission."

Many thanks to all who had a part in making this a memorable conference. It was good to be there.

Roy H. Mohagen
Grafton, N. Dak.

CONFERENCE COMMENTS

I was thankful that I had the privilege to attend a number of sessions of our Bible Conference which was held in the New Luther Valley Church in McVille, N. Dak.

In these days of turmoil and anxiety it was so good to spend several days around God's Word listening to messages from pastors and laymen. In each session there was a good spirit and much was said that was of value in our everyday lives, in our home life, and in our church work.

The evening evangelistic services were a real climax to the day. Pastor Molstre gave a challenge that reminded us of the seriousness of the times in which we live and of the necessity of being right with God.

It was interesting and encouraging to hear how the new fellowship is growing. May God's blessing continue to rest upon this church. Let us remember to pray for this fellowship and to support financially as God directs us. I'm sure more Bible conferences would be a help to all of us.

Donald Jacobson
Binford, N. Dak.

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